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FEATURE STORY

AT MORIARITY'S

by FRED E. SHUEY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

AT MORIARITY'S. By Fred E. Shuey 3

SHORT STORIES

THE GHOST PLAYS A HAND. By S. Gordon Gurwit 15
KNOCKING A GRAB-BAG 25
THE RUBY BULLET. By Wilder Anthony 27
THE HAND. By Orrin Simons 37
THE CRIMSON POMPON. By Caroline Bingold 45

MISCELLANEOUS MATTER

FIGHTING A DEVILFISH 14
PIGEONS SNARED BY THOUSANDS 24
ARAB WRITES 110 WORDS ON SINGLE GRAIN OF RICE 26
GREAT WAR TAUGHT VALUE OF WOOD 35
QUEER BUGS 36
SPIDERS AS ARCHITECTS 43
TURNING STONE INTO CANDY 44
SEAWEED HARVEST AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY 57

CURRENT NEWS

SEEING WITHOUT EYES——LARGEST CRATER IN THE WORLD——A ROCKING-STONE FROM BUENOS AIRES 58
ALASKAN BOUNDARY MONUMENTS DESTROYED——INDIANS MADE SAWS MANY CENTURIES AGO——REMARKABLE SNOWFALL 59
HAUNTED FOURTEEN YEARS 60

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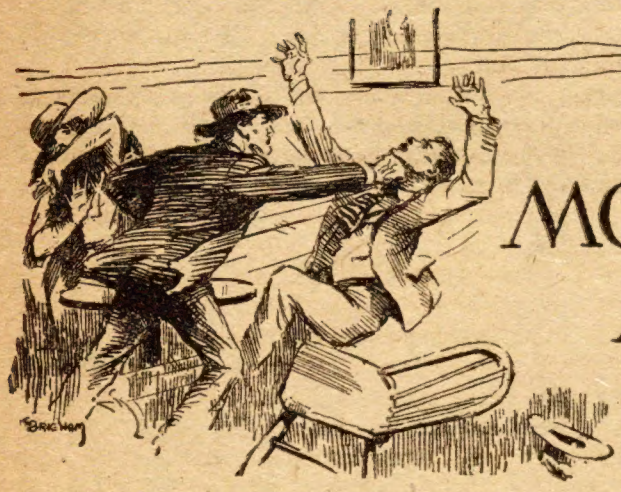
Please Take Notice

WE trust that our readers are pleased with the great improvement we have made in this magazine, and wish to assure them that we intend to keep adding to the interest of each succeeding issue. We have prepared a splendid feature story for the next number. It is entitled "The Lost Star of the Films," and was written by Jack Bechdolt, a pastmaster at fiction writing. It is undoubtedly one of the most interesting novelettes ever composed by this talented author. No. 97 will also contain another startling mystery story by the author of "The Hand" and some gripping sketches by such brilliant writers as William Hamilton Osborne, Dustin Mack, Richard L. Hughes and Joseph Tozzi, besides other recognized magazine writers of known ability. There will be several fascinating articles from the pens of experts on technical subjects and a large number of short items about peculiar incidents happening in all parts of the world. In fact, No. 97 is going to be one of the best issues we have ever published, and we strongly advise you not to miss it. Order a copy ahead from your newsdealer. We invite our readers to compare the quantity and quality of the stories and articles we are publishing with those in any of the higher-priced magazines. You will find that we are giving you more and better stories for ten cents than any similar publication on the newsstands. Please tell all your friends about this publication. If you have not entered our cash prize contest read the conditions in No. 95 and mail us your entry before November 15th, as the contest closes on that date. The names of the winners will be published soon after the contest ends.

THE EDITOR.



At MORIARITY'S

by

Fred E Shuey

CHAPTER ONE

THEY called him Speed. His real name or from whence he came no one at Moriarity's knew. Attention was first centered on him the night of the big fight in the dance hall. The part he played in this fight won him the admiration of the girls, the respect of the men, and the friendship of Moriarity. For one of the belligerents was in the act of tapping Moriarity on the head with a quart bottle of beer when Speed joined the game. The manner of his joining saved Moriority's head from damaging contact with the bottle and won Speed the name by which he was known.

It was Saturday night, several months after he had thus broken into social and pugilistic prominence at Moriarity's, before anything further occurred to break the even tenor of a drink or two at the bar, a two-step or fox trot in the dance hall, and a pleasant hand at poker the balance of the night in one of the rooms over the saloon.

On this particular night Speed sauntered into the barroom, bought a round of drinks for the customary hangers-on, and passed into the dance hall. It was still early and save for Speed and one waiter the place was deserted. Ordering a drink Speed seated himself at one of the tables along the side of the room. His order was just being placed before him when a girl entered the room through the street entrance. She wore a wide, drooping hat, which in conjunction with a fur well up over neck and shoulders effectually concealed her face from view. Speed did not know her.

"Who's the girl?" he inquired of the waiter.

"New one on me," the latter replied.

"Well, take her order and bring me the bill. We must make strangers feel at home, eh, Tom?"

"I'll bet on you making them feel at home, all right," the waiter replied laughingly, as he went to get the order.

In a few minutes he returned.

"Well?" Speed queried.

"Well—the devil!" the other replied. "Do you know what she says when I tell her a gentleman is buyin' her a drink? She says 'I don't care for anything, thank you.' Can you beat that? 'Thank you' in this joint—and refusin' a drink, too. She must be nuts."

Speed whistled reflectively.

"All in the point of view, Tom. Now, if she knew I deliberately intended to get drunk tonight, she might think I was nuts. Wouldn't

be far wrong at that—but what the hell? Bring us another!"

He settled somewhat defiantly in his chair, lighted a cigarette and awaited the arrival of the crowd.

An hour passed and Speed still retained his chair. He glanced at the girl, who remained where she had first seated herself. The crowd commenced to arrive, the orchestra opened up with a fox-trot, and Moriarity's was on in full blast.

Picking the now perspiring Tom from the maize of the waiters on the floor Speed motioned another drink.

"Is she a good-looker, Tom?" he inquired as the drink was placed before him.

"She's a sleepin' beauty, boy! Go over and wake her up."

Speed drank his whisky slowly, eyeing the girl contemplatively. The room was warm, but her fur had not been removed. The orchestra commenced his favorite two-step. He had not yet danced. He looked about. Several girls smiled invitingly, but his glance reverted to the girl with the fur. Suddenly he arose and walked to where she sat.

"Shall we dance, girlie?" he said.

The girl looked up and Speed saw her face for the first time.

Involuntarily he recoiled. No dissipated look here. No painted face or brazen eyes. Instead, cheek delicately tinged from the tip of Nature's brush—eyes innocent of any acquaintance with the lure of Moriarity's.

Speed was drunk and eloquently did it speak of an inherent fineness in his nature that he saw and recognized in the face of the girl before him the immaculate purity of her soul. For at least a minute he stood before her, his gaze taking in every detail of the winsome face. He noted the parted lips, the white teeth, the frightened eyes. Not rudely did he stare, but wonderingly—could it be reverently? Gradually as he stood before her, the look of fear in the girl's eyes subsided and she smiled faintly.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I have made a mistake."

She did not answer, but the look in her eyes was that of a lost child finding one it knows and trusts.

Speed returned to his seat and consumed innumerable cigarettes, but he ordered no more whisky. A number of people spoke to him, but he did not hear. His gaze was again fixed on the girl, and after one half-frightened look into his face the speakers would pass on.

As it drew later the dissipation increased. Young girls and old men, young men and old women, glided by in each other's arms or sat drinking and smoking at the tables. Most were good-natured, some were cross, all were boisterous.

Through it all the girl with the fur clung tenaciously to her seat. Frequently she was asked to dance, several times urged, but always she refused. A crowd of men entered the room from the bar. Drunkenly they wended their way among the tables. One of them, a huge, coarse-featured fellow, fell across the table at which the girl was sitting. As he recovered himself he peered into her face. A repulsive leer overspread his features. He spoke to her, taking her by the arm. The music drowned the sound of the words, but the girl drew away and a vicious look succeeded the leer on the man's face.

Reaching out suddenly he grasped her by the shoulders, lifted her from the chair and drew her to him. The music had just ceased.

"By God, pretty one, you will love me," he said harshly, and in the quiet which succeeded the cessation of music his voice sounded across the hall.

The words were scarcely spoken when a fist shot past the shoulder of the girl and landed squarely on his jaw. His hold on the girl relaxed, his arms went up in the air and he stretched full length on the floor, clearing a space as he fell.

One of his friends started for the man who had struck the blow.

"Keep out of this, you fool!" cautioned another. "That is the guy they call 'Speed'. Got his name here one night for whipping five guys in about that many seconds."

And now Speed's voice sounded, hard, metallic, menacing:

"Clear the way, you guys! We are going out of here and we are going now!"

Taking the girl by the arm he pushed her toward the door, and the crowd which had

surged about fell back at his approach. They reached the outside safely and Speed signalled a taxi.

"What address?" he questioned the girl briefly.

A number was given and pushing her inside Speed entered the car behind her.

CHAPTER TWO

FOR several minutes neither spoke and then Speed said:

"I am sorry I used you so roughly in getting out of there, but I know that crowd. When a blow is struck in Moriarity's it is like touching a match to powder. The psychology of handling any situation where the odds are against you is to act first, act quick, and get away before the reaction sets in."

There was no reply and the remainder of the ride was passed in silence.

The car came to a stop before the number given, a private residence in an exclusive residential section of the city. Speed assisted the girl to alight and then started to re-enter the car.

"Wait!" she said, and her voice was soft as the melody of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song."

"I am not so ungrateful as to let you go without telling you how deeply I appreciate the fine consideration you have shown all evening. I was among the disreputable, seemingly one of them, yet instinctively you knew that I was not. You do know, do you not?"

"Yes, I know," answered Speed, and in contrast to the musical tones of the girl his voice sounded harsh and hopeless. "Being one of the disreputable myself, it is an easy matter to pick a rank outsider."

The girl answered quickly;

"You are not disreputable! Why — why, you are wonderful. Somehow—it seemed—when you spoke to me tonight that long ago we had met. Of course I was mistaken?"

A low sound came from the lips of the man. It commenced as a laugh, but ended in a choking, chaotic groan. In the dimly lighted street his face appeared pale and tense. He turned from the girl toward the car and after a moment he answered:

"Of course you were mistaken. We have never met before. And now I had better go."

Again he started to re-enter the car, but again the girl stopped him.

"You have been so wonderfully kind to me tonight, I hate to presume further on your generosity, but I am terribly worried. If—if it is not asking too much I would like to tell you why I went to Moriarity's tonight. I have had no one to confide in, and meeting you the way I have and finding you so—so wonderful and resourceful, I feel as though I can tell you my troubles and that you will tell me what to do."

Slowly Speed turned to her.

"You can tell me whatever you wish and I will do all I can to help you."

The girl looked toward the chauffeur, who from time to time had glanced at them impatiently.

"Perhaps we had better go in the house. No other should hear what I have to say."

Telling the taxi-driver to wait, Speed followed the girl into the house. She turned on the light, offered Speed a chair and seated herself near by.

"My name is Shirley Neville. You have probably heard of father — Judge Neville. Mother is dead and my twin brother Harold and I are the only children. Recently Harold got to drinking heavily and he and father had a quarrel. Let me see. This is the 6th of October—that was just a week ago today. Harold left the house that night and I have not heard from him since. Father left the same day on a three-weeks' trip. I did not know where to reach father and I could not report the matter to the police because of the publicity. Today in looking over some of Harold's things I came across a card with Moriarity's address. I decided to go there tonight in the hope of finding my brother. I did not know what a horrible place it was. Something terrible might have happened had you not been there. And now I am no nearer finding Harold than I was. Won't you please tell me what to do?"

For a moment Speed did not answer, then he said:

"I have seen your brother, Miss Neville.

His likeness to you is remarkable. If you promise not to make any more foolish attempts to find him I will guarantee to bring him home within the next forty-eight hours—possibly yet tonight."

The girl sprang to her feet.

"I will promise—surely, I will promise," she said eagerly. "Where was he? Did you talk to him?"

"I may as well be frank with you, Miss Neville," Speed answered. "I sat opposite him in a poker game the other night. He is in with a tough crowd and is writing checks pretty freely. I can handle him, all right. The hardest job will be getting him away from the outfit he is with—a set of professional gamblers with headquarters over the saloon. One or two of them are the hardest characters in the country. But don't worry, Miss Neville. I will get him if I have to kill the whole outfit."

His lips tightened in a straight line as he arose.

"I have the utmost faith in you, Mr. ——, why I don't even know your name."

"A name is unimportant. They call me 'Speed'."

She held out her hands to him impulsively.

"I can never thank you sufficiently for what you have done. I know you will bring Harold home, but please, please be careful."

For a moment he held the girl's hands, then without answering her suddenly raised them to his lips.

CHAPTER THREE

LONG after he had gone Shirley Neville stood where he had left her. Her gaze rested on the hand he had kissed, but there was no resentment in her eyes, only surprise—and wonder.

When Shirley Neville arose the following day her brother had returned, but in reply to her inquiries regarding the man known as Speed he would give no response.

On various occasions as the weeks and months rolled by, she questioned him, but he refused to talk. In fact his whole nature seemed changed. He had quit drinking entirely, but where before he had been joyous and frank he was now quiet and reserved—almost sullen.

Not understanding his attitude, but realizing the futility of further questioning, his sister ceased her inquiries, but the name and face of a man called Speed were often in the memory of Shirley Neville.

One day, over a year after the momentous night Shirley had visited Moriarity's, she was casually glancing over a daily paper when her attention was attracted by the headlines:

"SPEED McQUARRY ARRESTED!"

And glancing at the body of the article she read:

"The mystery of the death of 'Gentleman' Joe Garritt, notorious gambler and gunman, who was killed by a shot from a revolver in a room over Moriarity's saloon on the night of October 6th, last year, has been solved, police say, by the arrest of Robert McQuarry, who was known to his acquaintances as 'Speed'. McQuarry will make no statement, but officers say they have evidence that will convict McQuarry of the shooting following a quarrel over a card game. Little was known of McQuarry until police began investigating his record. They have discovered that he is a former Yale man, an athlete of first rank, and inherited considerable money at the time of his father's death, which was quickly spent in riotous living."

More followed, but the paper slipped from Shirley's fingers to the floor. She had seen no account of the murder at the time; possibly because she had read the papers but little immediately following her brother's return.

She now sat pale and faint as her thoughts went back to the night this shooting occurred and she knew that it was the man now under arrest who had then sat beside her in the very room she was now in.

Vividly she recalled every incident of the evening. Again she heard the decisive tones, saw the commanding jaw as he said:

"I will return your brother, Miss Neville, if I have to kill every man in the outfit."

Slowly she raised her hands before her as the memory of the last incident followed in logical sequence after the others. So vivid

was the memory that again she tried to read the unfathomable look in the man's eyes as he gently pressed his lips to her hand.

It was an evening paper she had been reading. Twilight was just darkening the room when Harold Neville, entering the room, found his sister, hands before her, eyes staring into the unseen.

His glance went from her to the paper on the floor and with set face he started to pass on.

"Brother!" The girl's voice was hollow and lifeless. "Tell me about it."

He paused, then slowly walked to where she sat, placing his arms about her affectionately.

"Never ask me about it again, dear. I will tell no one—not even you. I hope they cannot connect me with it, but if they do all the laws of God or man can never drag one word from me that would harm Speed McQuarry. They can send me to hell first."

His voice broke and he walked quickly from the room.

CHAPTER FOUR

JUDGE RUTHERFORD B. NEVILLE was a man of methodical habits. One of these habits of some years' standing was the doing of precisely what one certain young lady, known to the judge as Shirley, desired. So it was through the instrumentality of the judge that a few days later Shirley Neville was admitted to the jail without question.

As she entered the passage which led to the cell of Robert McQuarry she shuddered nervously. The iron gratings to the right and left were depressingly suggestive. A stray sunbeam entering the passage through a barred window at the end tauntingly whispered the beauty of the day without. A bestial-looking fellow—unshaven, his long, talon-like fingers clutching the bars of his cell—leered at her repulsively. The guard accompanying her, noting the look, rapped the fellow on the fingers with a short club he carried and the man drew back, tobacco-yellowed teeth showing in a wolfish snarl.

They continued down the passage until they reached a cell at the end.

"Here, Speed!" said the guard. "Lady to see you."

Slowly a man arose from a seat on the edge of his cot and came to the iron bars, peering out at the girl, and with a pale face Shirley Neville again confronted the man called Speed.

She tried to speak, but her words were inarticulate. She put her hands nervously to her face and drew them down, gazing at them dazedly. They were wet with tears.

"Please, Miss Neville, don't do that," said Speed. "There is nothing to worry about. I am sorry you came. This is no place for a girl like you."

"No place for a girl like me—no place for me?" she answered, finding her voice in jerky, hysterical sentences. "Where, then, is my place? I know what happened—I know—I know! Harold would never tell me and won't talk now, but I know, I tell you. You did this thing for him—for me—and I am going to know all about it."

"Miss Neville!" Speed's tone was low and commanding. "Stop that talk at once! The guard is only down the passage a short way. No one knows anything about you or your brother's connection with this matter. Why should they? You had nothing to do with it. You are worrying without cause. They have no proof. They are only trying to bulldoze me into confessing. Don't worry, Miss Neville, everything will be all right."

"Oh, Speed—Mr. McQuarry—forgive me if I trouble you, but my heart is breaking. I know I have caused this trouble. Speed, look at me. You will not lie. Didn't I cause this trouble when I begged you to bring home my brother?"

"It don't make any difference who caused the trouble, Miss Neville. It won't help my case any and will only injure you by airing these things to a sensation-loving public. Go home and forget that you ever knew me."

"You evade my question which makes my belief certain. As for forgetting, I can never forget. Tell me what I can do to help you?"

"Miss Neville, it is best to be frank. You can help most by just simply leaving me alone. Stay away from me entirely."

Slowly the color receded from the girl's

face, leaving it death-like in pallor and her voice was very low as she replied:

"Your words are harsh, but I do not blame you for feeling harsh towards one who has caused you all this misery. But I want to help, and if staying away will help you most, then I shall stay away. But you cannot keep me from praying and I shall pray for you—and for myself."

Slowly she turned away, but his voice halted her. The guard was not in sight.

"Shirley!"

As she turned to him again she looked into a face as pale as her own.

"God forgive me for saying what I am about to say, but I cannot permit you to go thinking of me as you must after my brutal words.

"All my life I dreamed and planned and prayed about the one girl that would some time come to me, but she never came. And after a while I got to gambling and drinking, and as I sank lower and lower beneath the high plane upon which she stood my thoughts of her grew fainter and fainter until I believed she was forgotten.

"And then came the night I met you at Moriarity's. God! The tragedy in my soul that night! To see in your face and eyes, hear in your voice, the paradise of my dreams resurrected, and with my vision of Paradise to feel the hell of a soul damned eternally outside the Gate.

"Shirley Neville, when I gazed into your eyes for the first time I knew I had loved you from birth.

"And now you can go home and pray for me—and for yourself, for I have marred the purity of your soul by the sacrilege of my thoughts."

His head dropped convulsively on his hands which tensely gripped the iron bars of his cell.

Slowly the girl placed her small, white hands through the bars, resting them on the head of the man, and a soft wonderful light glowed in her eyes.

"I will pray, Robert," she said lowly, "prayers of thanks that I have received such an ennobling, wonderful love."

CHAPTER FIVE

PATRICK MICHAEL MORIARITY, Irish by name, pugnacious by nature, and proud possessor of Moriarity's saloon and dance hall by right of ownership, was holding a final consultation with Henderson, one of the best known criminal lawyers in the State. He was from a far distant part of the State, but Moriarity was footing the bills and he spared no expense. It was the day before the trial.

"That's the ividence we'll have tomorrow, Hinderson, from the lips of them whose veracity has niver been questioned."

"I don't like going into a trial in the dark this way, Moriarity. I feel like something is going to happen. I would rather see and talk to the witnesses myself. I don't like keeping McQuarry in the dark, either. Under your instructions he knows nothing about these witnesses and still he refuses to take the stand himself."

"Speed be domned. I don't want him on the stand and I don't want him to know about the ividence until it's too late for him to stop it. It's running his head in a noose he'd be. It's meself that's paying you and it's meself that's got the ividence. Domn it, I'd give me saloon away to clear the lad.

"As I told you the State has subpœnaed me as witness. I'll give them hell when they examine me and you give me hell when you cross-examine.

"You call them two witnesses whose names I gave you. They will testify as I have told you. Murder is murder, but ividence is ividence, and we'll give them the best we've got."

At nine o'clock the following morning the courtroom was crowded by a curious throng.

Before the Bench, in the space reserved for attorneys and clients, sat Henderson and McQuarry. Opposite them, on the other side of the table at which they were seated, sat the prosecuting attorney, Bayles.

In the center aisle in the front row of seats, within a few feet of the attorneys, sat Moriarity, looming head and shoulders above the others. His rosy face beamed beatifically with a cherubic smile.

As the judge who was to try the case en-

tered the room, Moriarity's smile slowly disappeared. He had tried to keep his connection with the defence of Speed McQuarry an entire secret from the prosecuting attorney, but now some strong emotion caused him to forget caution.

"Hinderson!" he called in a loud whisper, and as the other looked toward him motioned for him to come. He met Henderson half-way.

"I thought Grayson was to try this case. What the hell's Neville doing in here?"

"Grayson was to try it, but he is at the point of death. Neville is one of the finest judges on the Bench. Have you anything against him?"

"Not a thing. It just bowled me over for a minute, though."

He returned to his seat just as the bailiff with three monotonous raps and in a singsong voice announced the Court in session.

A few other matters were first disposed of by the Court and then the case of The People vs. Robert McQuarry, alias 'Speed', was called.

The preliminaries were quickly over with, the jury selected and sworn, and the actual trial commenced.

The State first introduced proof of the death of Joe Garritt, that he died in Room No. 7 over Moriarity's saloon on the night of October 6th, the preceding year, and that he died almost instantly as the result of a shot fired from a .38 Smith & Wesson revolver. They followed this up with proof that at the time of McQuarry's arrest they found in his room a .38 Smith & Wesson revolver.

Under cross-examination it developed that at the time of the arrest the revolver was not loaded and that McQuarry denied ownership of it, but would not explain how it came to be in his possession.

At this point, it having reached the noon hour, the Court called a recess.

Immediately after the lunch hour the State put on the stand a man by the name of Franks. He testified that on the night of October 6th of the previous year he had been asleep in a room adjoining the one in which the shooting occurred. That about three o'clock in the morning he had been awakened by loud talking from Room Seven, which was Garritt's room. That the first words he understood clearly were spoken by Speed McQuarry, the prisoner at the bar. He testified that he was well acquainted with Speed, that he was familiar with his voice, and that he was positive the man who spoke was McQuarry. The words he heard were:

"Garritt, you have robbed this boy long enough. Get away from in front of that door or, damn you, I'll put you through it."

A moment later he heard a shot and jumping from bed and rushing into the hall, he saw three men, two of whom he could not recognize, but one of whom was Speed McQuarry, going down a rear stairs which led to the alley. He swore McQuarry was the last of the three men and that he carried a revolver in his hand. Franks testified he went directly to Garritt's room, which he found in darkness. He turned on the light and saw Garritt, a bullet wound in his temple, lying on the floor, and he was dead when Franks examined him.

Their next witness testified he had been in the saloon and about three o'clock had started for home, going through the alley on a short-cut. He reached the stairway leading from the rooms over the saloon to the alley, just in time to see three men rush from it into the alley. He did not know any of them at the time, but testified one of the men was carrying a gun and that he had particularly noticed that man, and he now identified the prisoner at the bar as being the man.

Cross-examination failed to shake their testimony in any material respect.

CHAPTER SIX

THE State then called Moriarity to the stand and a lightning gleam in the prosecutor's eyes evidenced the fact that he realized he must fight for all the evidence he secured from this wily old rough-neck. After the identifying questions he began:

"Moriarity, your saloon and dance hall is open for business all night, is it not?"

"Yis, sir—twenty-four hours in the day."

"What hours are you in charge of the place?"

"Shure, I'm in charge the twenty-four

hours. I am down on the job all night, but I sleep over the saloon and one of the byes calls me if anything goes wrong during the day."

"At any hour of the night, Moriarity, you know just who it is gambling in your rooms over the saloon, do you not?"

"Indade and if I thought any wan of the gintlemen I had me rooms rinted to would gamble I'd throw him out in a howly minute."

"You don't permit gambling up there, then?"

"Indade I do not. I have me rooms rinted to gintlemen."

"Did Joe Garritt have a room rented from you?"

"Yis, sir."

"Did Speed McQuarry?"

"No, sir."

"I want you to tell the jury how it happened that Speed McQuarry was upstairs on the night of October 6th in question."

"Indade, and he wasn't there."

"Did you see Speed that night?"

"Shure I saw him. A big spalpeen was after insulting a lady and Speed lands him wan on the jaw which jars him loose from all earthly connictions for fifteen minutes."

"Ah! This Speed was a fighter, eh? A bad character?"

"Not a bad character, no. But a fighter! Say, he was a dozen bolts of lightning jined in wan. But listen to me, Bayles. Speed McQuarry needed no gun. He niver carried wan in his life. He fought with the mitts God Almighty gave him to fight with. Shure he could whip a dozen like you and that pie-faced Garritt."

"Don't connect me with that gambler."

"Excuse me, Bayles. I apologize—to the dead."

"Your Honor, this witness is insulting."

"Well, you are wasting the Court's time," replied the judge. "If you have no material questions to ask him, he will be excused. Call the next witness."

"That is our case, Your Honor, unless we have something in rebuttal."

Moriarity slowly started to leave the stand, but the voice of Henderson halted him.

"Just a moment, Moriarity. You testified in reply to questions from Mr. Bayles that on the night of this murder Speed McQuarry defended a girl in your saloon?"

"In the dance hall it was."

"Now, Moriarity, if you know, you may tell us the name of this girl."

"Her name was Shirley Neville."

The words were out before Speed could get to his feet, but once there he stood gazing furiously from his attorney to Moriarity, then sank back in his seat pale and trembling.

One more there was in the courtroom who had arisen and stood, hands gripping the sides of his desk, glaring at the witness.

"What was that name you spoke?"

"Shure I said Shirley Neville, Your Honor's daughter, and it's a sweet colleen she is, Judge."

But now Henderson was on his feet, his face showing surprise and consternation, but also determination.

"Your Honor," he said, "a man's life is at stake, and I believe Mr. Moriarity's testimony in regard to Miss Neville is going to be the first stone in the alibi we expect to prove. As Your Honor knows I am from out of the city. Although I knew there was a Shirley Neville connected with this case I assure you I had no idea whatever that she was Your Honor's daughter. I took it for granted that the girl in question was merely a habitué of Moriarity's. If Your Honor wishes we can even yet arrange to have the case continued and tried before another judge."

A life of stern adherence to the law gradually mastered the judge's agitation.

"Silence in the Court!" he thundered, and in a few moments' fear of missing some new sensation quieted the restless, wonder-struck crowd.

"Go on with the trial."

Speed grasped Henderson by the arm, but the latter shook him off and went on with his questioning.

"Moriarity, you testified that Speed McQuarry knocked down a man for insulting Shirley Neville."

"Yis, sir—down and out."

"What time was this?"

"About eliven o'clock."

"After he knocked this fellow down, what did McQuarry do?"

"Shure, before the bunch knows there is a fight they might get in on, he grabs the girl and pushes her toward the door and onto the street. I follows right behind ready to paste the first guy that looks like he wants it. When they reached the street, Speed grabs a taxi, him and the girl gets in and away they go."

"Did you see Speed again that night?"

"No, sir. He niver came back."

"That is all, Moriarity."

Again Moriarity started to leave the stand, but this time the voice of the prosecuting attorney halted him.

"You say McQuarry never returned to the saloon?"

"He did not."

"You mean you didn't see him."

"I didn't see him—no. And he niver came back."

"Are you sure of what you say?"

"I know what I am talking about."

"He could have come in through the alley, gone up the rear stairs, and you wouldn't have seen him at all, isn't that a fact?"

"It is not. No wan could go up or down the rear steps without me knowing it. The door to the stairs is worked from a switch behind the bar. The switch-box was locked and I had the key in me pocket."

"You have great precautions, Moriarity, for a place where you say there is no gambling."

"Shure and I protect me roomers."

"If you know every one that goes up or down the rear stairs, I will ask you to tell us who the three men were that went down them at about three o'clock in the morning on the night of October 6th?"

"It's a bloody lie thot is. Nobody wint down them stairs."

"Two men have testified to that fact here on the stand."

"Sure and it's dirty liars they are. I know the spalpeens. I wouldn't trust them for a drink at the bar. Why didn't you pinch Franks? He was the only wan up there at the time!"

"That is all, Moriarity."

That was the State's case. Too late the prosecutor saw the tragic mistake he had made by calling Moriarity to the stand.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE first witness placed on the stand by the defense was a man named Hoyne, who testified that he was the owner and driver of a taxi-cab. That between eleven and twelve o'clock on the night of October 6th in question he had driven Speed McQuarry, whom he knew, and a girl that he did not know to a certain address, which, he testified, was the home of Judge Neville. He testified that Speed told him to wait and that Speed and the girl went into the house together.

"Did you wait?" questioned Henderson.

"Only a few minutes. It was pretty cold and I drove to a saloon to get a drink. I was gone about twenty minutes. When I returned the house was in darkness and thinking Speed had already gone, I did not stop. I saw Speed the next day and he paid me."

"That is all, Hoyne."

After a brief cross-examination by Bayles the witness was excused.

Speed's attorney now arose.

"Your Honor, the testimony we have to produce is going to be hard for you to hear. I am anxious to arrange with Mr. Bayles, if possible, to even yet have the case tried anew before a different Court. Our only other witness is Your Honor's daughter, Shirley Neville."

At this moment McQuarry, who had been sitting, white and tense, sprang to his feet, but the judge spoke. His voice was firm, but his gray hair framed a face that looked haggard and worn.

"Bailiff! Keep the prisoner quiet. Mr. Henderson, had I known before, of course I would not be sitting here today. But as it is, I am now the judge trying this case and as such judge I shall try it. Any objections either side may have as a result can be taken care of in a motion for a new trial. Call the next witness."

A girl came forward from the rear of the room and took the witness-stand. Her face was very white and her eyes did not leave Henderson's face. After questions identifying her as Shirley Neville, he said:

"Miss Neville, were you in the courtroom when Mr. Moriarity and Mr. Hoyne testified here on the witness-stand?"

Very lowly, but distinctly, she answered, "I was."

"I will ask you one general question, then. Was their testimony, in so far as it concerns you, the truth?"

"It was."

"Now, then, Miss Neville, I will ask you if you know what time Speed McQuarry left your house that night?"

"I do."

"What time was it?"

"Four o'clock in the morning."

"Then Speed McQuarry could not possibly have been over Moriarity's saloon at three o'clock that same morning as witnesses for the State have testified?"

"He could not?"

But here Bayles interrupted, his voice biting and venomous.

"I object to that question and answer as being a conclusion of the witness. Let the jury judge for themselves."

"Objections sustained and the answer of the witness ordered stricken out," ruled the judge.

"That is all, Miss Neville," said Henderson.

She started to leave the stand, but Bayles halted her.

"Sit right where you are, Miss Neville." The words were polite, but the tone hard and merciless—the glitter in his eyes ominous. Frank Bayles had been elected prosecuting attorney four consecutive years. He had been elected because he was a splendid attorney and a merciless prosecutor. As he saw what he had considered a sure case becoming dangerously imperilled by the testimony of the witness before him, he threw himself into the fight with all his power. The questions came from his mouth like the sharp crack of a Winchester.

"When did you first meet Speed McQuarry?"

"That night at Moriarity's."

"Ever hear of him before?"

"No, sir."

"Pretty soft for Speed. Took you home the first night he met you and spent the night with you, eh?"

Speed and Henderson were on their feet together.

"I object to the insulting tone of that question," shouted the attorney.

"Objection over-ruled. Witness, answer the question. Order in the court!"

But the order of Court was unavailing, for before the thunder-struck court attaches could act Speed had thrown Moriarity, who had vaulted the railing and seized him, to the floor. With one bound he cleared the table and faced the prosecuting attorney.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"BAYLES," Speed said tensely, "I didn't kill Joe Garritt and I have never killed any other man, but, damn you, I am going to kill one now."

A deputy sheriff with leveled revolver sprang toward McQuarry, but a blow from Moriarity knocked him to the floor.

A woman in the crowd screamed. A man swore. A girl threw herself between McQuarry and Bayles. A sound gradually increasing in volume, like the onrush of mighty waves, arose from the throng. Pandemonium broke loose.

As intense heat will ignite certain combustibles, so the tenseness of the situation caused spontaneous combustion in the crowd. Women fainted or cried. Men, without knowing why, fought furiously, some surging toward the door, others toward the Bar. Court officers, revolvers in hand, tried to stem the onrush, but they were trampled underfoot.

Three men, who had just entered the room when the storm broke, formed a phalanx and forced their way to the front. Before the Bench three persons stood about whom the mob surged but did not touch. One was Judge Neville, one his daughter, and the other Speed McQuarry. It was Shirley who had sprung between Bayles and McQuarry. Bayles had disappeared in the crowd.

The three men approached.

"Are you the judge of this court?" inquired one of the men, addressing Judge Neville.

"I am judge of what was the court," replied the latter grimly.

"We are from the LaClede Detective

Agency, employed by Mr. Moriarity to locate a man name Shade. We located him when at the point of death and we have here his dying confession."

He drew an envelope from his pocket from which he took a couple of sheets of paper and handed them to the judge. Breathless, Shirley and Speed leaned toward him as he commenced to read aloud:

"Being in full possession of my mental faculties and with full knowledge that death is certain and imminent, I make the following confession and statement of facts which I swear are the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth:

"On the night of October 6th, 19—, I was playing poker in Room Seven over Moriarity's saloon at the corner of Huxley Avenue and Ninth Street. I was playing with Joe Garritt and Harold Neville and there were no others in the game or in the room until about two o'clock in the morning, when a man known as 'Speed' entered the room and joined the game.

Speed had not been in the game long before he began trying to get Neville to leave the room with him. Garritt got mad because Speed was trying to get Neville to leave and when Neville finally consented to go, Garritt got before the door, refusing to let them pass.

I was behind Speed and Neville. They were facing Garritt and could not see me. At a signal from Garritt I drew my revolver and the next moment Garritt turned off the light. The switch was near the door.

"I had been Garritt's buddy and he thought I was going to shoot Speed. But Garritt had double-crossed me once and I saw my chance to get even. I fired straight for where Garritt stood and then sprang for the door. In the darkness I bumped into one of the others and pushed the revolver into his hand. We all reached the hall together and met Moriarity coming up the front stairs from the saloon.

"'Open the rear door, quick!' whispered Speed, and down Morarity went like lightning. In the dim light of the hall I could see Speed carried the revolver. We rushed down the rear stairs and separated when we hit the alley.

"Shortly after this I had a long talk with Speed about that night. He believed Neville was the one that did the shooting and seemed for some reason very anxious to protect Neville. When the cops commenced getting hot on the trail, I cleared out.

"Speed could clear himself by taking the stand, but I am afraid he will not do so for fear of implicating Neville, and for that reason, and in fear and full knowledge of impending death, I make this confession."

The paper was signed by Clyde Shade and properly witnessed.

"He died within an hour after making that confession," said one of the men.

"This statement will absolutely clear McQuarry," said the judge. "But, my God, what a network of premeditated perjury it discloses."

"Forgive me, father," whispered Shirley.

The judge did not answer, but turned to a man approaching.

"As soon as the room is cleared, sheriff, we will resume court. We have new evidence which will clear McQuarry."

He turned to his daughter and McQuarry.

"There is a little room adjoining. You two can step in there. We will notify you when you are wanted."

Slowly they started for the other room, but were stopped at the door by a huge, red-faced man. His coat was missing and his shirt was half torn from his body.

"Howly mither, but it was a beautiful rough-house," said Moriarity. "And who do you think I met at the door but Harold Neville fighting his way in and claiming he did the shooting. Blessed saints, thinks I, another mix-up, and I says to him: 'Off with you instant or you'll spile the fine alibi we have fixed up,' and I shoved him out the door instanter."

"Your alibi is already spoiled, Moriarity," returned Speed. "Speed is dead and the detectives you hired have just brought in his dying confession. But you have gotten yourself and Miss Neville in trouble for perjury."

"What d'ya mean trouble? Judge Neville won't start anything very strong. As for Bayles, I have that gintleman where I want him. He is running for re-election, and it's

meself that controls the votes to push him across or beat him. And Bayles knows it. Everything's fine. Go on in there and talk. Shure you'll be a free mon in a few minutes."

As the door closed behind them Shirley said:

"Harold has thought all along that you did the shooting. He was coming to take the blame himself."

"He is just like his sister, wonderfully compassionate and generous. I thank God you have come into my life if only for a short time."

For a long time she did not reply and then she said, very lowly:

"Do you remember, Robert, what you said to me about your love when I first visited you at the jail?"

"I have prayed for your forgiveness ever since."

"Oh, Robert, there was nothing to forgive. Don't you understand? I loved you then—I have always loved you. Take me in your arms, dear, and then you will know."

Reverently he drew her to him, and the judge, entering the room, bowed his head in benediction.

FIGHTING A DEVILFISH

CAPT. JOHNSON, a Canadian diver, was at work on the wreck of a ship which had gone ashore on a coral reef near Ruatan, Honduras. A new leak had developed, and it was necessary to stop it at once, although the hour was four in the afternoon. Johnson called his assistants, and they anchored the diver's boat with the apparatus. On his way down Johnson noticed the rare beauty of the translucent tropical waters and the lovely color of the coral and the thousands of fish swimming about.

As he was approaching the point where the work was to be done a long, dark arm shot across the face glass of his helmet. He had been in tropical waters before and knew the sign. It was the octopus—the devilfish—feared by all divers. He gave the danger signal and was pulled up.

At the surface he considered the situation. The ship was leaking badly and could not be safely left thus all night. He called for a heavy harpoon and cut the handle, making a weapon about three feet long. Armed with this, he went down again to fight the octopus and stop the leak.

Slowly he approached the spot where the octopus was hidden under the bilge of the vessel. As he approached the creature moved from the under side of the vessel, gathering itself for the attack.

There were but four or five feet between the coral reef on which the vessel had grounded and her side at this point, and Johnson settled himself there for the battle. It was not slow in coming. The creature extended one of its long arms. Johnson gave a quick thrust with his harpoon, but the devilfish was quicker than he and snatched away the arm.

Again the creature struck, and this time it touched Johnson on the hip. On the instant it lost its arm, severed by a blow from the harpoon.

Then the fight began in earnest. The devilfish tried to envelop the man in its many tentacles and the diver kept slashing with the harpoon. He inflicted wounds enough to disconcert the creature and prevent it from enwrapping him, but for some time none of the wounds were serious.

At last, just as the creature had come to alarmingly close quarters, he managed to drive the harpoon into the body. When badly injured the cuttlefish discharges a great quantity of dye, which colors the water a jet black. Instantly Johnson found himself in a volume of ink. He gave the signal and was pulled up.

It took some time for the dye to clear away so that anything could be seen in the water. Then Johnson went down again. He did not have to renew the battle. The octopus was dead.

The GHOST PLAYS A HAND

by S. Gordon Gurwit

CHAPTER ONE

"SIT down, chief," said the district attorney, nodding a greeting. He closed the door of his office carefully, locked it, and seated himself opposite Bob Robinson, the city's chief of detectives. Selecting a cigar, he pushed the box to Robinson, then sat moodily staring at his desk blotter.

Robinson lit his cigar, looked curiously at the young district attorney and waited to hear why he had been summoned.

"I'm—in a tight fix," said the district attorney at length, with some hesitation. "You remember that fellow Stem—the fake stock operator—whose trial comes up next week?"

Robinson nodded.

"Well," hesitated the district attorney, "there has been—pressure brought to bear. They want me to drop the case and—let him get away."

Robinson started, a soundless oath forming on his lips.

"What!" he exclaimed. "After we catch him with the goods? Why, he's a crook, Ben, and we can prove it! But, of course," he added hastily, "you'll go through with it. You're not going to let anybody scare you—not if *I* know you!"

Ben Anthony — the district attorney — flashed a quick glance at his friend, a wry smile upon his lips.

"Suppose I were to tell you not to be so sure about that?" he answered in a low voice.

A look of blank incredulity crept upon Robinson's face. His keen eyes fastened upon his young friend with apprehension.

"Suppose," he suggested quietly, "you tell me all about it. I don't understand a remark like that—from you!"

Anthony flushed. His lips became a straight firm line; his brows frowned and the muscles of his jaw tightened perceptibly.

"Bob," he said, turning to his friend impulsively, "you've known me for some time now, haven't you? Have you ever known me to do anything that couldn't bear the light of day?"

Robinson shook his head.

"No, I haven't."

"What do people say?" continued Anthony. "Do they believe in me? Do they believe I'm true to my oath of office? Do they believe I'm conducting this office as it should be conducted?"

Robinson smiled.

"Of course they do, Ben! The general opinion is that you are the ablest man the city has ever had in this office—and that's not flattery, either!" He stopped, puzzled. What could be troubling his young friend, he wondered. While Anthony was not rich, he had an ample fortune of his own besides an adequate salary; he had been elected to a high political office which he was filling brilliant-

ly—even the newspapers admitted that! He was young, a favorite, and his future prospects, politically, were very bright. "Suppose," he continued, "you tell me just exactly what's wrong. What sort of pressure could any one bring to bear that would worry you?"

To his surprise, Anthony rose to his feet suddenly and began to pace the room in silence; then he sat down abruptly, facing Robinson.

"I'll tell you," he said, in a low strained voice: "You recall when we arrested Stem he said he'd never go to trial? Said he'd be out on bail in two hours—and he was, damn him! Well, soon after that I met a—girl."

"Oh!" said Robinson, his eyes narrowing.

"You know, Bob," continued Anthony, "that I'm not much of a lady's man. I've been too busy working, trying to get somewhere—to succeed in my profession—to be much of a social adept. Well, she was very—beautiful. I guess—I guess I thought a great deal of her—too much, I suppose.

"One day she told me she was one hundred dollars shy of a thousand-dollar allotment she had undertaken to raise for some charitable organization; she asked me if I wouldn't make up the difference 'for sweet charity's sake.' I said I would, naturally. It was a small matter, for charity, too.

"At her request I made out a check to a certain William Fogarty. She told me he was the president of the United Orphans Home—or something like that! I didn't know, and I didn't have any reason to suspect anything. I find now I made out the check to the landlord of the flat she lives in. It looks like I was paying the—rent for her. Get the inference?"

"Ah!" drawled the chief. "She was *that* kind?"

"I didn't know what kind she was until too late!" Anthony's face was scarlet. "I suppose I played like a poor fish——"

"Go ahead," interrupted the chief. "Let's hear the rest of it."

"Well," went on Anthony, "it was a frame-up, of course! She invited me to come and see her at her apartment one evening. I went. She received me with a great—ah—show of affection. She was dressed in one of those—ah—silky kimono things, cut rather daringly. I was surprised, but before I could think of what was happening the kimono slipped from her shoulders — I *supposé* it slipped — she threw herself into my arms—a light flared up suddenly, and somebody had a picture that compromised me! I jumped up and tried to get at the photographer, but he had gone, and the girl only laughed at me."

"So!" said the chief. "Anything else?"

"Yes," admitted Anthony. "I found out that she'd rented the apartment in my name—for Mr. and Mrs. Anthony—and she has my check for the rent! Worse yet, I found out later while investigating that she's a notorious character."

"Who?" abruptly.

"Fay Miner!"

"So!" said Robinson again, grimly. "Fay Miner! A notorious habitué of the bright lights; ex-chorus girl; ex-affinity of a certain rich man; beautiful, unscrupulous and more than once a subject of police suspicion! How did you come to know her?" the chief demanded.

"I was introduced to her in a café by somebody — I forget the circumstances, but of course I know now it must have been planned. I was struck by her looks and she made herself pleasant. She always behaved like a thoroughbred while I was with her. How was I to know? And now," went on Anthony, grimly, "Stem's brother-in-law has the picture and the check, and I'm told that unless I let Stem get away, the whole business will be turned over to the newspapers! You know how the *Gazette* would like that! They'd gloat over it! They never liked me and it would be a tasty morsel for all the papers. Why, I couldn't go into a courtroom again without hearing a snicker! What right would I have to stand up for truth and justice when I, ostensibly, was leading a double life myself? You know what the public is like! They like scandal; they like to see some one dragged down in the mud; they like to see a public official apparently exposed! I'd —have to resign if the story came out."

There was a brief silence.

"Who," asked Robinson suddenly, "is Stem's brother-in-law?"

Anthony smiled; a smile that was without humor.

"John J. Drinkwater," he answered.

An exclamation of surprise escaped the chief's lips.

"What? The big stock and bond man?"

Anthony nodded.

"That's just it," he said. "I tried to get hold of the check and film, but he keeps them on his person night and day. If it were anybody else, there would be ways of securing them; but you can't trump up charges against a rich and powerful man. He'd see it through—and the story'd get out—and that's just what I want to prevent.

"He's guarded by private detectives night and day, and he doesn't leave his hotel. The trial comes up next week and I'm told that unless I do something by Saturday night the story that he handed to the newspapers. Of course, I'm not going to do a thing. I'm going to prosecute—come what may!"

Robinson sat silent for several minutes. Plan after plan flashed through his fertile brain, but each one was instantly discarded as impracticable. Drinkwater was a rich and powerful citizen, heretofore beyond suspicion; hard to approach or accuse. Furthermore, he had strong circumstantial evidence of Anthony's apparent misconduct that would be hard to explain away if the attempt to obtain it came to light; and that was exactly what must not happen. Strong-arm methods wouldn't go with the rich Mr. John J. Drinkwater. Finally he spoke:

"Don't do anything until you hear from me. Perhaps I can help you. I have a very clever chap on the staff. You know him, don't you? Rawlins. I'll put him to work on this. He may succeed in obtaining the film and check."

"I certainly wish he could!" exclaimed the young district attorney. He was greatly worried, and it was very apparent. He was nervously chewing his cigar and his eyes searched his friend's face constantly. "If you can't help me," he finished, "I'm done!"

"Let me get Rawlins here," said the chief, reaching for the telephone.

Twenty minutes later Rawlins, a quiet, efficient-looking young man, joined them.

The story—in part—was told him, and the chief finished by saying:

"It's up to you, Rawlins, to get to Drinkwater somehow and get that check and film. Use your own judgment as to the best way—and stop at nothing! By that I mean go as far as necessary without actual violence, understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"And above all," continued the chief, "don't get caught!"

"I understand, sir."

"It's a queer consignment to hand you, Rawlins, but this is a case of necessity. We must fight crooks with their own methods."

Rawlins left, and after a tight, friendly handshake and a reassuring pat on the back, Robinson left Anthony and went back to his office.

CHAPTER TWO

THE next afternoon the three men were again gathered in the district attorney's office, eagerly listening to Rawlins's report.

"I found," said Rawlins, "that your man has not left his rooms for days. He lives, as you know, on the fourth floor of the Vanaster Hotel, and he even has his meals sent to his rooms.

"I learned that an attempt was made recently to get into his rooms, but the intruder was surprised by his private detectives and barely got away.

"He has two detectives with him all the time, and when he ventures into the lobby—which is very seldom lately—there's one on each side of him.

"Of course, being who he is, it's not the easiest thing in the world to find excuses to gain his friendship or visit him or get near him without creating suspicion.

"Well, I managed—no matter how—to get into his rooms last night. As I was cautiously feeling my way across the room to the door of his bedroom the lights flashed up, and there stood Drinkwater in the doorway of his bedroom in pajamas. He held a wallet in his hand—the one I was after."

"Did you get it?" eagerly interrupted the District Attorney.

"No," smiled Rawlins ruefully, "I didn't. I was surprised, but I covered him with my gun and demanded it.

"He grinned at me in a sickly fashion and then I felt the cold nose of a gun poked into my neck.

"I remembered what you said about getting caught, and I threatened to shoot him on the spot if they didn't let me get away.

"'You may get me!' I said, "'but I'll get *you*, mister, so if that's fair exchange I'll start right now if you move an inch!'

"Drinkwater was scared that I'd kill him and I managed to make a bargain for my liberty, backing out and keeping him covered all the time. The detective who had surprised me was pretty disgusted. It was close work. They had me dead to rights! I was in his rooms and I had no business to be there. He's not a crook or a suspicious character, and I couldn't explain my presence or my errand if it came to a showdown."

Rawlins paused and glanced at his chief and at the district attorney. Both were silent and deep in thought.

"Well," said the chief, "that will be all, Rawlins — and forget about it, understand? I'll see you later at headquarters."

Rawlins left, and again both men sat in silence, puffing absently at their cigars.

"I suppose it's all up with me," said Anthony at length in a hopeless voice. "He's wise to every move—the old fox! And he'll guard those articles every day and night now until the trial comes up, then he'll hand them to the newspapers if I refuse to let his precious brother-in-law get away." Anthony's face became grim. "It may make me the laughing-stock of the city and the Bar and give me a black eye—but I'll not resign until I send Stem to Sing Sing, where he belongs!"

The chief nodded.

"That won't be hard," he said. "We caught him with the goods and he has practically no defense. But I wish I could help you get that stuff back."

"Can't you think of anything, Bob?"

"Not a thing," answered the chief, shaking his head slowly. "Rawlins is my cleverest operator. If he fell down, I don't know any one who could succeed. It takes a thief to catch a——" He paused abruptly, his eyes contracting. Suddenly a smile spread over his rugged features and he turned to Anthony with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Ben," he cried, "there's one chance in a hundred left—but I think it's a good one! I'll get hold of Jimmy Stuart—The Ghost—and send him after Drinkwater!"

"Who is Jimmy Stuart, The Ghost?"

"The Ghost," explained the chief, "is—or was—the cleverest crook in town. He never was caught; he never was where you could find him, yet we knew that he was at the bottom of more than one big job. The police named him 'The Ghost' because of his uncanny faculties and super-ability. The cleverest detectives were never able to get the slightest thing on him. He's reformed—oh, yes, this one *really* has—and he's been in vaudeville for over five years now making big money as a magician. You've seem him—Stuart, The Great? Well, he's clever; a clever magician and a clever actor. I haven't got a thing on him, so I don't know if he'll be willing to help me. I have no leverage to use; but I always treated him white. He's a likable cuss, and perhaps I can get him to help us out. I'll see."

He picked up the telephone, called a well-known theatre and was finally connected with his man.

"It's a personal matter I want you to help me out with, Jimmy," he explained. "A personal favor. What? No, I forgot all about that five years ago, Jim. Nothing like that! This is a personal matter, I tell you." He gave him the district attorney's address, said he would expect him in half an hour, and turned to Anthony.

"There!" he exclaimed. "If The Ghost can't help us—only Heaven can!"

Anthony smiled; not a very cheerful smile.

"Pretty vague hopes, chief," he said. He had little hope of obtaining help from magicians and ex-crooks when pitted against John J. Drinkwater's uncanny shrewdness and caution. He saw political ruin and ridicule staring him in the face, and he was in a state of gloomy despair that the chief's enthusiasm could not easily dispel.

"We'll see," grinned the chief. "Sorry I didn't think of The Ghost at first! He's a wizard! He's not the ordinary run. It takes a very clever crook to really reform and go straight as a string, you'll admit? Well, he's that kind! Really a splendid chap. I *like*

him! I don't believe in holding a man down or holding a past up to a man who shows a real desire to go straight."

Thirty minutes later a knock sounded on the door, and in answer to the chief's cheery "Come in!" a young man of perhaps twenty-eight or twenty-nine entered.

CHAPTER THREE

THE district attorney was interested and surprised. He expected to see a somewhat tough character with the earmarks of the underworld about him; instead he saw a very handsome young man, dressed very quietly and in extreme good taste. He had a pleasant, clean-shaven face in which twinkled two shrewd, laughing blue eyes.

"Ah, chief!" exclaimed the newcomer. "You're looking well!" He cast a keen glance of recognition upon the district attorney and nodded to him in acknowledging the introduction.

"What's on your mind?" he demanded genially of Robinson. "Why am I thus honored by being summoned into the Presence? Want me to show you a couple of card tricks so you can fool your friends at the club? The hand's quicker than the eye, you know." He laughed.

The chief smiled and shook his head.

"No, Jimmy," he said. "I'll tell you what I want in a minute."

With cigars glowing, the chief told the entire story of the frame-up to the intently listening Ghost.

"Nothing doing!" exclaimed The Ghost when the chief had finished. "I'm not that sort. Never was!" He glanced at the chief swiftly. "Why should you pick on me to do this? You haven't any direct or personal knowledge that I am able to do it."

"But, Jimmy——"

"No," interjected The Ghost; "I'm no burglar or dip! I'm a respectable citizen. Why, chief, suppose this was a plant—a frame-up. You'd have me with the goods! Or suppose I was caught—*they'd* have me with the goods! It would be a losing game for me all around; and from what you tell me, it would be a rather hard trick to perform. Besides, I'm not in that business. I'm an actor."

"And a good one, too," grinned the chief. "My best man has fallen down on this, and I know you can do it—you're the only man in the city that can do it!"

"Not me!" denied The Ghost, smiling. "I make enough in my profession to be independent, so money wouldn't influence me one way or another. It's a matter of principle with me." His eyes grew serious. "If there ever was any suspicion directed against me, chief, I'm sure there is no cause for it today. I am, in no way, the same chap you used to—hear about. My record is open to inspection at any time. I don't see why you should have picked on me. I think you know that I wouldn't do anything like that. It's against my principles. Like to help you out, chief, because you are a good fellow and a white man, but you're asking too much."

Anthony had been watching him intently; now he spoke in a quiet voice:

"You just said it was a matter of principle. Let it go at that. Here are several unprincipled dogs who have framed me in a tangle that means my political finish. They haven't hesitated to use any kind of means that would stop me from prosecuting a big crook who has stolen nearly a million dollars from the poor people of this city through fake stocks and bonds. I'm going to prosecute regardless of how it affects me—that's my principle! But I'd like to avoid the public scandal they are planning for me, because it would force me from office and I couldn't serve the people. I really want to serve the public. I've played fair here, and I'd like to continue.

"That story in the newspapers would come near—killing my mother." He paused for an instant and cleared his throat, then went on: "I realize that it's a funny thing to do—to urge a man to go out and commit a technical crime for my own particular benefit, but this is one of the times when even such means are fair.

"I'm innocent of any wrongdoing in the matter, but they have it within their crooked powers to twist the story so that I'll only look like a fool if I deny it. They've got that photograph and check, remember, to back up their story.

"If I knew how to go out and get those two things from them, I'd do it myself in a minute; but I don't. If you can help me, I wish you would. But whether you do or not, that crook Stem will be compelled to disgorge the money he's stolen, and I'll send him to Sing Sing if I have to go through hell to do it!" He brought his fist down with a crash on the table to emphasize his remark; then busied himself lighting a cigar. They both noticed that his hands trembled slightly.

There was a tense silence in the room for perhaps a minute. The Ghost had been keenly watching Anthony while he was talking, as well as the chief.

"Ah," he drawled finally, "if I should consent to help you, Mr. Anthony, and you, chief, would I have protection of your respective offices?"

"Certainly, Jimmy!" exclaimed the chief eagerly.

"No interference by your men in that locality? And will you swear me in as a deputy, and make the consignment a matter of record—to protect me?"

Anthony and the chief looked at one another quickly, then nodded.

"If need be," said Anthony quietly, "I'll tell the whole story to the newspapers myself —take my medicine, and resign after the trial of Stem. I'll not allow you to be involved or injured in any way no matter what happens."

The Ghost smiled.

"I guess you're a white man, all right," he said quietly. "I guess you'd do what you say." Then, with a barely perceptible smile, he turned to the chief. "All right, old-timer, I'll take a chance!"

CHAPTER FOUR

THE next evening two young men entered the fashionable and crowded lobby of the Vanaster Hotel arm in arm. One was slightly intoxicated, and inclined to lag.

The pair drew smiles from some of the men lounging in the lobby, and several wanted to know, in mock seriousness, "Where does he get it?"

Paying no attention to the remarks, the sober young man directed his unsteady friend to the clerk's desk.

"Let me have a room," he said; then noting the clerk's look at his friend, he continued: "My friend and myself were at a dinner over to the Ram's club, and I guess he's taken a little bit too much. He's all right, but he won't go home. Let me have a room, and I'll put him to bed. He'll be all right in the morning."

The clerks were smiling. Somehow a genial souse with a partial case of intoxication aroused their risibilities.

The sober young man registered, paid for the room in advance, and the clerk looked at the name as he entered the room number opposite it.

"John Shelton Stewart?" he said aloud. "Is he the famous actor over at Reith's this week?"

The sober young man nodded, and the intoxicated one, who had been fixedly examining his glove, raised his head. He was recognized immediately as the well-known magician by several of the clerks and others in the lobby who happened to be standing near.

"Ge'l'men," said the intoxicated young man gravely, "ateenth 'mendment——"

"That's enough, Jim," hastily interrupted his sober companion, and hustled him off toward the elevators accompanied by the bellboy who had the key to the room.

Once in the room, the intoxicated one fell into the bed and went fast asleep. His companion looked at the bellboy and smiled.

"Better let him alone, I guess," he said, handing the boy a dollar. "He'll sleep it off and be all right in the morning. Better not let any one disturb him, or he might get into trouble. I'm not even going to take his clothes off. Come on, let's get out of here!"

They left, locking the door from the outside and throwing the key over the transom.

"He's sure to see it in front of the door tomorrow," smiled the young man to the bellboy. "Can't miss it! Lord! what an expensive snout-full that boy's got to-night!"

But the intoxicated one seemingly didn't go to sleep. He rose presently, took a drink from a flask and seemed to be washing his mouth with the mixture—or gargling it—because some of it spilled upon his still immac-

ulate shirtfront. Then he spied the key, opened the door, and staggered crazily out into the hallway. He mounted a flight of stairs to the fourth floor with seeming difficulty, and here his joy of life became audible. He sang as he staggered through the hall, not loudly, but in a pleasant voice slightly off key. Finally, unable to keep his unsteady feet, he fell with some noise, still singing:

"'Oh-o-o-o—whata—pal—was Mary!
Oh-o-o-o-o—whatapal—wasshee!
A' nangel wash born——'"

A door on his right opened and a big man came out and looked at the singer. An amused smile flitted across his face.

"What is it?" called a harsh voice from the room.

"A young feller, soused, sir," replied the man standing in the hallway.

"Zash so?" said the intoxicated one. "Lemme tell *you* sum'thin': Sinsh atee' 'men'ment, gettin' soushed is—ish 'chiev'men'! Trouble thish country ish dem'crash too ru-publican, an' ru-publicans ain' dem-cratic 'nough! Shpoilin' th' country! Can't get deashent drin' no place less'n one buck — 's robbery! High cos' booze put country ona bum! Prishes 'ave t' come down. Public can' sch-tand——"

"No, the public won't be *able* to," interjected the man, laughing, "if they all fill up on *your* brand! Come, get up!"

"Won't do it!"

"Come on," urged the man. "You can't stay here and sing all night!"

"Why not?" demanded the intoxicated one belligerently. "Like — to know why not? Thish free country? 'J'ever read dec-ration of indish——"

"Come, come!" said the man testily. "That'll do! Get up!" He lifted the young man to his feet and was immediately embraced as a brother.

"You good feller!" declared the inebriate. "You're m' frien'! Gonna buy you nish presen'!"

Two men came to the open door of the room and looked at the spectacle, one with amusement, the other—a shrewd-eyed, stocky man—with a mixture of contempt and annoyance.

The drunk waved an affable hand to the latter.

"'Lo there, old dear!" he cried genially. "I know you! Saw your pi'shure ina papish! You're John J. Drinkwater." He laughed immoderately at something that seemed to cross his mind. "'Ell of a drink—water, ain't it? Good thin' jush th' same. Use it fo' battleshipsh. What'd become glor-rious Amer'can navy if wa'sh no water?" He had been clinging tightly to the man who had helped him to his feet; now he let go and supported himself by leaning against the wall. He was grinning vacuously.

"Call the hotel detective," instructed Drinkwater sharply, "and have him come up here at once and remove this idiot!" The man standing at his side disappeared into the room to obey.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" said Drinkwater to the intoxicated young man. "What are you doing here, anyway?"

"Live 'ere," said the young man, swaying slightly. "Good hotel—fine roomsh." Then he lost interest in the question and continued to follow his own whimsical train of very disconnected thought. "Women 'r' no good! No, shur! Not 'tall! What thish country needs ish uniform divorsh law an' exchangsh departmen'." He was addressing both men with the grave seriousness of intoxication, and they were both listening with slight smiles. Apparently, the other guests of the hotel along the hallway didn't hear the souse, for no other doors were opened.

"Some people like l'il ones, an' some like big ones," the young drunk was saying gravely. "'F a feller's got a big one, ought t' be able to trade for two l'il wifsh an' get somethin' t' boot——" He staggered, and to keep from falling he grasped Drinkwater tightly around the neck. Drinkwater struggled furiously to get loose, and finally flung the young man on the floor with the aid of a powerful push from the big private detective. Cursing, Drinkwater straightened his coat, his tie, brushed his sleeves and glared at the sprawling figure.

"Take him to the elevator," he snarled to the detective, "and hand him over to the

house detective when he comes up. He smells like a whisky distillery, the dirty pup!"

The detective raised the young man with some difficulty and almost carried him down the hall to the elevator doors, where the drunk held on to the iron grating and swayed dangerously upon his unsteady legs.

Just then a snarling cry came from Drinkwater's room, and a moment later Drinkwater leaped out into the hall.

"I've been robbed!" he shouted. "I've been robbed!"

The big detective released the drunk and ran down the hall toward his employer. The drunk was swaying dangerously and threatened to lose control of his legs at any moment.

"Grab him!" shouted Drinkwater to the detective, pointing at the drunk. "Grab him—he's the man! Don't let him get away—he must still have it with him! Bring him in here!"

The detective paused for an instant irresolute, half-way between his employer and the drunk; then he swiftly made his way to the young man's side and took a firm hold of his collar.

"So that's your little game!" he exclaimed grimly. "I'm teach you a lesson or two, my lad!"

But slight as the boyish figure of The Ghost was, the big detective had great difficulty in tearing him loose from the iron elevator doors which The Ghost was clasping with superhuman strength. When his hold did finally give, they both went to the carpeted floor in an intricate struggling tangle. The detective, however, soon regained his feet and brought The Ghost to his feet with him, sputtering in drunken offence.

Just then the elevator doors clanged, and the two house detectives summoned by Drinkwater's men stepped up to both of them.

"What's this?" demanded the larger of the house detectives. "What are you trying to do here?"

The big private detective, holding on to The Ghost grimly, explained:

"This fellow has just robbed Mr. Drinkwater of a wallet! He's pretending he's drunk, but I grabbed him before he could make his get-away!"

"Why, that's Stuart, The Ghost!" exclaimed the house detective, who had recognized him in the lobby and had seen him on the stage. "He's a headline actor—he's no dip! There must be some mistake here!"

The big private detective only grinned.

"We'll see in a minute," he answered. "He didn't get a chance to make a get-away or pass the leather to a pal, so we'll take him into Mr. Drinkwater's room and search him. I know he's got it, because he hasn't been out of my sight for a minute. If it's found on him, that ought to convince you!"

By this time there was plenty of noise in the hallway. Both hotel detectives, the two private detectives, Drinkwater and the intoxicated young man were all trying to talk at once. The drunk was protesting violently and making ridiculous efforts to get away. But he couldn't break the iron grip that held him, and he was forced into Drinkwater's room.

Here a painstaking search revealed—nothing!

The drunk spluttered and protested and had to be held; but after ten minutes of thorough searching, not a trace of the wallet could be found.

"Outrage!" stormed The Ghost, staggering to his unsteady feet after he was released. "Gonna shue ev'body for million dollash——"

Drinkwater was furious. His face was livid, and a constant flow of vivid profanity flowed from his white lips.

"You're no lady!" charged the drunk, looking at him unsteadily. "Talk like a bum! Can shee for yourshelf I haven't got wallet—what't'ell I want wallet for? I got sibsteen wallets! I'm rich man—buy 'nythin' I wan'! Whyn't search thesh birds? Big feller's got bad fash!"

The big detective's face went crimson as his employer's steely glance swept him. Drinkwater was desperate, and he now suspected everybody.

"Sure!" exclaimed the detective. "I'll turn out my pockets and so will my partner—just to show you, sir!"

"Damn you!" cried Drinkwater, furiously. "I had it just a few minutes ago! I felt it with my fingers! Now it's gone! If that kid took it—he pointing to the swaying

Ghost—"he should have it on him! He hasn't been out of your sight for a moment, and he hasn't had a chance to pass it to any one! I don't care who took it, but it had better be produced damn quick!" Drinkwater was eyeing his men now with some suspicion. Perhaps some one had got to him with more money? Perhaps he had been double-crossed!

The big detective was slowly laying the contents of his pockets on a small table; then, as he put his hand into the inside pocket of his coat, an expression of bewildered amazement crossed his heavy face. Slowly he pulled a long wallet from his pocket and looked at it in horror. Drinkwater snatched it out of his hand with the snarl of a wild animal and a curse. Flapping it open, he ran his fingers through the folds. It was empty!

"Well," said one of the house detectives, stepping forward, "that clears Stuart, sir. We've searched him and you admit yourself he hasn't any of the contents of the wallet. And now we find the wallet on one of your men! Stuart, by your own statement and your man's statement, hasn't been out of your sight for an instant——"

His sentence was cut short by a vicious cry from Drinkwater, who had suddenly snatched a revolver from his pocket and pointed it at the big private detective. He was disarmed not a moment too soon by the others, while The Ghost swayed and sang scraps of songs in maudlin happiness and oblivious of his surroundings.

Once more the drunk was searched from head to foot by all the four detectives, but the search yielded nothing.

"I want him arrested anyhow!" shouted Drinkwater furiously. "There were very valuable papers in that wallet as well as a big sum of cash!"

The hotel detectives smiled.

"On what charge, Mr. Drinkwater?" asked the older one, quietly. "You admit he's not been out of your sight for a moment since you missed the wallet. Well, we've searched him from head to feet three times and he hasn't any of the contents. Besides, your man had the wallet. I know who this young man is, Mr. Drinkwater. He is not the kind of man to arrest without a definite charge, and I warn you that you are laying yourself open to a hopeless suit for damages. The circumstances would be all against you, don't you see it?"

Drinkwater was finally left quarreling violently with his men, and the two house detectives took The Ghost to his room and put him to bed. He slept well all night, and in the morning was quite normal.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GHOST smiled pleasantly as he entered Anthony's office at eleven o'clock that morning. He noted the keen glances cast upon him by both men.

Seating himself deliberately, and selecting a cigarette, he puffed it a moment in appreciation and told the story to both men.

"But, how——" began the chief, still bewildered.

"Like this," laughed The Ghost: "When I embraced our good friend Drinkwater I got the wallet; when I was left alone for a moment by the elevator, I took out all the contents, and when the detective came back for me and we had a mix-up on the floor, I slipped the wallet into his pocket."

"That," smiled The Ghost, "was put into a stamped and addressed envelope that I had prepared before for just such a contingency, hastily sealed and dropped down the mail chute which runs down the elevator shaft. The action was covered by my swaying; my body concealed the mail chute from their sight, so they never thought of it——"

A knock interrupted him.

"Special delivery, Mr. Anthony," called the office boy, through the locked door.

Anthony rose, opened the door and received an envelope. Hastily closing the door again, he broke open the envelope with eager, trembling fingers. Inside was his check, a section of film and a print of the film. He winced as he looked at it. There was also some unimportant miscellaneous matter and six one-hundred-dollar bills.

Anthony glanced at the chief with vast relief in his tired eyes, and the chief smiled brightly.

"Better send the money back," he laughed. "That wasn't in the bargain! He'll probably need it before we get through with his precious brother-in-law!"

"Yes," agreed The Ghost, flicking the ashes from his cigarette, "send it back special delivery! I was in too much of a hurry last night to separate the contents!"

Anthony smiled, as he extended his hand to The Ghost.

"I'm not going to try to thank you," he said simply. "I couldn't. But you know how I feel about this, don't you? If there is ever a time when I can do anything for you you'll find I won't forget! And now I'll send those crooks up the river—yes, both of them! I've found out since that Drinkwater is involved in the whole scheme—that's why he fought so hard to make me lay down on the case!" A boyish smile lit his features. "Oh, boy!" he cried. "Watch what I'll do to them at the trial!"

PIGEONS SNARED BY THOUSANDS

THE pioneers of Michigan and other States of the Great Lakes recall sadly the days when wild pigeons were so plentiful in this region that they were killed by men with clubs as they swept in great flocks over the sand hills. In many of the pioneer localities twenty-one meals of wild pigeon in a week were not unusual, and much of the great State of Michigan was hewed out of the forest on a pigeon diet. A party would often go into the hills and kill thousands of the birds without a gun, slaughtering thousands only to waste them.

After the first railroads were built, the pigeon crop of several Michigan counties was worth more than their wheat crop. Few people of to-day realize or can imagine the magnitude of these mighty nestings of the birds. A pigeon-nesting would often extend for many miles north, east, south and west. Hundreds of nests would adorn every tree and the noise from the homecoming and departing birds would be so great that it was often impossible to carry on an ordinary conversation in the woods. Pigeon catching and killing became an industry. Carload after carload was shipped to New York and Eastern cities and dead pigeons were often piled up until they appeared like small haystacks.

Trappers from all parts of the country journeyed to the Michigan eldorado for the purpose of catching the birds. They did it, when a large catch was desired, with a net, 16 to 18 feet wide and 30 to 40 feet long. This was arranged with ropes and spring poles, so that when a number of the birds had alighted in the particular spot to which they had been lured by means of the stool-pigeon, the spring poles were released and the net pulled over the spot where the birds had settled, covering the whole number.

Few people who see the expression "stool-pigeon" realize how closely its commonly accepted meaning follows the truth. After the spring poles had been bent back and the net covered with light grass so it would not be visible to the birds, a wild pigeon which had been kept alive to act as stool-pigeon was brought into service.

A leather string was put with a half tie about each leg of the bird. Then with a small cambric needle a white silk thread was passed through the pigeon's eyelid on each side of the head, the ends of the thread were twisted together on top of the bird's head and the pigeon was blindfolded for use. The bird was held by the boots, as the strings were called, and set on the forefinger. It was raised up, and then the hand brought down quickly to see whether the bird would hover properly. When one was found that would suit, it was fastened by the boots to a pad about as large as the hand near the centre of the bed to which the birds in trees within sight were attracted to the bed, which had been scattered with wheat or buckwheat. When the bed had become filled with pigeons the spring pole was pulled and the net carried over, there being sufficient spring in the poles to spread it fully.

The greatest enemy of the pigeon trapper was the hawk, which often caught and killed his favorite stool-pigeon, just when it was most needed.

Knocking a Grab-Bag

"WELL, well," remarked the grocery-man, as the boy came into the store and sat up on the edge of the counter; "you loom up well for a boy with the ague. I thought you couldn't get out of bed; you haven't been around for a week."

"Oh, the ague's played out. I guess they run out of quinine in this town while I was sick. Anyhow, they fired nearly a barrel of it down my neck," replied the boy, helping himself to an apple.

"I heard your father was arrested last Saturday. What's the trouble?" asked the grocery-man, as he closed a new gate at the end of the counter he had made to keep the boy away from the sugar.

"Well, he did come near being run in, sure, and I guess he would if it hadn't been for me. You see, ma has been sick since she went into the deacon's cellar to draw cider and met that skunk, so she told pa if he would get a couple of good fat hens she would try and make a potpie for Sunday, as she felt her health failing, and if her appetite didn't improve soon she would go hence, whatever that means. So that evening pa started out after hens. He was too late to get dressed ones, so he got two live ones from the market and started home.

"Me and my chum were layin' for him, and when he got about half-way home it commenced to rain, and he started on a run so as not to get wet. We followed, and met a policeman, and told him we saw a man steal two hens, and pointed out pa as the man. The policeman started after him. Pretty soon pa saw some one was chasing him, and thought it was robbers, so he ran all the harder. Then the policeman pulled out his revolver, and fired into the air to scare pa, just as one of the hens got her wings loose and flopped it in pa's eye. Pa dropped with a groan, and said: 'I'm shot! Tell my wife I died happy.' Then a crowd got around him; but when pa found he wasn't dead he called for a stretcher, to be carried home to die with his family. While some of the crowd went for the stretcher, the rest began to examine him to see where the bullet went in, and when they couldn't find it he got up and offered to lick any man that said he was shot. Just then another policeman came up, and said he recognized him as 'Chicago Bill,' a notorious safe-robber, and that a reward was offered for him. Pa said he was an honest man, and agreed to go back to the market with the chickens and be identified. They found only one of the chickens, but the market man knew pa and fixed it, and then the policeman began to beg pa's pardon, and gave him five dollars to keep still about it. When pa got home he told ma he had helped to catch a safe-blower, and when he got his share of the reward she could have a new sealskin sack."

"Your father'll kill you some day. But what about that fuss at the social at the deacon's night before last?" asked the grocery-man, as he picked the fly-specks off from a lot of maple sugar he was putting away for "new maple sugar" next spring. "I heard the whole church was mad at each other over a grab-bag, and the presiding elder had all he could do to quiet things down."

"That don't amount to much," replied the boy. "There's always something turns up when the sociable season first starts in. You see, ma was appointed a committee to fix up a grab-bag. Me and my chum were digging bait that morning to go fishing, when pa came out, and said: 'Hennery, I believe you put up that chicken job on me, and I don't believe anything but hard work will reform you. I want you to spade up the ground under the currant bushes.' I asked him if he wanted a humpbacked, disfigured boy, made so by hard work. Pa said he would risk the hump, and told me to pitch in, and then went downtown. My chum said he would help me, and me and him got the job done before two o'clock.

When we got done, I come in and found ma had finished the grab-bag, and had it all loaded, with the top fastened with a puckering string, and hung on the back of a chiar. Ma was upstairs getting her Sunday clothes on, to go to the sociable, so it didn't take me and my chum long to empty the bag and get first choice.

"Then I got our mouse-trap and took it to the barn, and caught two nice big fat mice and put 'em in a collar-box, with holes cut in it, to give 'em air, and dropped that in the bag. Then my chum remembered a big snapping turtle he had in the swill-barrel, and me and him got that and wiped it as dry as we could, and tied it all up but its head and put that in just as the deacon's hired man came to take the bag over to the sociable. Me and my chum went down to his house and waited till the people got over to the sociable, and then we went over and got up a tree where we could see through the open window and hear all that was going on. Pa he stood over by the bag and shouted, 'Ten cents a grab; don't let anybody be backward in a good cause.' Three or four had put up their ten cents and made a grab, when an old maid from Oshkosh, who had been to the springs for hysterics, got in her work on the collar-box. When she got the cover off, one of the mice that knew his business jumped on her shoulder and crawled down her neck, and the other dropped down on the floor and started round to meet the other one. You'd a-died to seen her flop and show her stockings and scream. The deacon's folks thought it was another attack of hysterics, and pa and the deacon got her on the sofa and held her while they poured paregoric and cayenne pepper down her.

"When she got loose she screamed all the harder. Then one of the other women seen the mouse and got up in a chair and shook her skirts and asked the new young minister to help her catch the mouse. The poor fellow looked as though he would like to, but he failed. Just then the bottom of the chair broke and let her fall over on ma. Ma called her a 'hateful thing' and told her she ought to be ashamed of herself. Finally they got things in order, but no one wanted to tackle the bag, and as there was where the profits came in, pa braced up and said he'd like to know why everybody acted so 'spicious. He would like to see a grab-bag that would give him the hysterics, and said ' women are always gettin' scared at nothin'.' He then put down ten cents and jammed his hand way down in the bottom of the bag, but he didn't keep it there long. He gave a jump and yanked his hand out, yellin', 'Thunder!' Then he swung it over his head to shake it off, and brought it down on the deacon's head and smashed his specs. Then he swung it the other way, and struck the woman president of the sewing society in the stomach and knocked her down in the deacon's lap. After pa had hollered himself hoarse, the turtle let go, and pa said he 'could lick the man that put that steel trap in the grab-bag.' Then pa and ma got mad, and everybody began to jaw and they all went home. There's been a sort of coldness among the members ever since. I guess pa won't have a humpbacked boy, but I'll get even with him, you just see if I don't."

ARAB WRITES 110 WORDS ON SINGLE GRAIN OF RICE

NESSI EFFENDI MARKAREM, an illustrious Arab penmen, is visiting Cairo and exhibiting specimens of his art. These, a dispatch from there reports, include a grain of rice on which he has written 110 words from the Koran.

England once boasted a penman equal in subtle delicacy to this Arab. Peter Bales, it is recorded, put in the compass of a silver penny more things than would fill several ordinary pages and presented Queen Elizabeth with the manuscript set in a gold ring and covered with a crystal, together with a magnifying glass so powerful that the Queen could easily decipher the manuscript, "which she held on her thumbnail and commended the same to the Lords of the Council and the Ambassadors."

The RUBY BULLET

by *Wilder Anthony*

"THERE'S a man outside who wants to see you, Inspector."

"What does he want?" Inspector Walsh looked up quickly.

"He has something to report; a message from the coroner, I believe, sir. He says it's very important."

"Send him in, then."

The attendant disappeared, and the detective looked up at the clock. It was nearly nine in the morning, and he had been up practically all of the previous night; if this should chance to be a new case, as was more than likely, he would probably have to postpone the rest he had been promising himself. However, he made no complaint. In his business one had to be prepared for emergencies. He pushed the papers he had been examining to one side and looked up with a smile as a young fellow in the livery of a chauffeur stepped into the office.

"Hullo, Tom," he greeted, recognizing the newcomer as the coroner's chauffeur. "What can I do for you?"

"I have a note here from the boss, sir." the man answered, grinning. "He told me to rush it through to you."

Inspector Walsh took the folded paper the man handed him and spread it out. It was evidently a page torn from a pocket notebook, and hastily scribbled upon it in Dr. Slade's well-known hand were the following words:

"Come out to Glenton right away if you possibly can. I've just stumbled into something big. It's murder, I think, and mystery —all kinds of it. Tom has orders to ignore speed limits. Hurry. SLADE."

Walsh smiled slightly as he refolded the note and reached for his hat. He and Coroner Slade were old friends; they had puzzled out many a mystery together, and the detective knew that there must be something decidedly unusual behind the present summons. As it happened, he had nothing especial on hand that morning, the case which had kept him up most of the night was practically ended so far as he was concerned, and he never thought of sleep when there was a mystery to be solved. He chewed upon the unlighted cigar in his mouth rapidly, and a flash of secret joy, of pleasurable expectation, brightened his deep-set, gray eyes as he followed the chauffeur down to the waiting automobile.

A trifle more than thirty minutes later he was standing in a room on the second floor of a two-story house in the aristocratic suburb of Glenton, some ten miles from the city proper. This second-floor room was furnished as the den of the owner of the house, a Mr. Philip Conrad, who, with the exception of an elderly man-servant, had lived alone there for about four years. Its lozenge-panelled windows looked out upon a well-cared-for

garden and a small grove of cypress trees, which gave the property a most attractive appearance. Opposite it was the broad white-surfaced stretch of the highway, and beyond this were open fields. To the right and left were similar houses and their gardens.

Just now, however, Inspector Walsh was not thinking of views or scenic effects. With his hands clasped behind him and the cigar in his mouth—a mere stub now—tilted at a sharp angle, he stood near the centre of the room, looking down at the dead body of a man, which lay stretched out on a divan. The dull winter sun, streaming in through the narrow windows, slanted directly across the head and shoulders of the body, throwing each feature into sharp relief, showing with horrible distinctness the distorted appearance of the dead man's face and the crimson smear on his lewt breast just above the heart. The dead man was Phillip Conrad.

He lay on his back in an easy, natural position, and but for the bullet-hole in his breast and his distorted features there was nothing remarkable in his appearance. He was apparently about fifty years of age, and, except where his vest and shirt had been pulled open to expose the wound, he was fully dressed in a brown suit. His left arm was thrown above his head, the right hung limply to the floor. A few inches from the fingers of this hand lay an old-fashioned single-action revolver of large calibre. To the touch the body was cold and rigid, showing that death had occurred some hours previously, perhaps half a day.

During several minutes of complete silence Walsh eyed the corpse speculatively, standing as still as though he had suddenly been turned to stone, albeit every nerve in his body was alive and tingling. As he stood thus it seemed as if his entire mental machinery was centred on the one act of seeing. One felt that those keen eyes took note of things invisible to the ordinary gaze, although the man himself gave no sign of life; his thin face was Sphinx-like; for the time being he was all eyes and brain. Once he shook his head faintly, as if in answer to some inward question, and once he bent forward eagerly. Suddenly he glanced up at the coroner, who stood on the opposite side of the body.

"When did this happen? How did you discover it?" he asked.

"Some time during the night, I think," Dr. Slade answered. "It was several hours ago, at any rate, although it's hard to tell exactly. As you see, there has been very little surface bleeding—the hemorrhage, as often happens in such cases, was internal, and, strange to say, for nobody seems to know who did it, I found the wound roughly bandaged. I had been a couple of miles beyond here to visit a patient and was returning about eight o'clock, when Jones, the dead man's servant, stopped me. He had just discovered the thing then, I believe.

"When I entered the room things were just as you see them now. I have moved nothing except the bandage I just mentioned."

"H'm! You spoke of murder—mystery—in your note. You've discovered something odd, I take it?"

"Yes; decidedly so. That bandage over the wound puzzled me for one thing. The man could hardly have fastened it there himself, you know. But that wasn't all. Look here." Dr. Slade took something from his pocket and held it out toward his companion, smiling oddly as he did so.

Inspector Walsh looked down at the extended hand, caught his breath sharply, changed color, and gave vent to a little cry of surprise. "What — where did you get that?" he demanded tensely.

"From the wound in Conrad's breast," Dr. Slade replied, the smile on his lips broadening as he noted the detective's amazement, for it was not often that the little man thus showed his emotions. "The wound had a peculiar look—it seemed very small to have been made by so heavy a gun—and, as I happened to have my instrument case with me, I probed it. This was in it. It's the thing—the bullet—that killed the man."

"The bullet! Great Heaven!" Inspector Walsh pounced upon the glistening object in the physician's fingers and carried it to a window, where he subjected it to a careful examination through a small magnifying lens which he took from his pocket. When he finally looked up his eyes were shining with astonishment.

"You recognize it, of course," the coroner

remarked. "I knew that you would. It's the Tera Ruby—I felt sure of it."

Walsh nodded. "Yes, it's the Tera, all right," he admitted. "There's no doubt of that, but for a minute I thought I was seeing things. Some shock, that, to have a ruby, worth a goodsized fortune, flashed on you suddenly along with the announcement that it has just been cut from a dead man's heart. I felt sure that the stone had been smuggled out of the country and sold by this time. It was stolen more than a year ago, you know."

"I know," Dr. Slade nodded. "I thought you'd be interested. That's why I called you out here. It's not often that a man is found shot—murdered—under such conditions."

The detective said nothing for a moment. He merely turned the ruby over and over between his fingers, gazing at it as if even yet he did not believe his own eyes. In the morning sunlight the great stone glistened like a drop of fire. It was wonderfully beautiful, immense in size, and of the purest water—one of the finest rubies in the world, the experts had claimed. Until about a year ago it had been owned by Adrian Johnson, an American millionaire, who had purchased it in France for a fabulous sum. Then it had been stolen, and, despite the efforts of detectives all over the country, had completely disappeared. Now it had come to sight again in the body of a man who had just met with a violent death.

Walsh finally handed the ruby to the coroner. "Put it away," he said. "Lock it up carefully. Hide it somewhere as soon as you can. I'll venture a guess that Conrad's is not the only life that has been lost over that thing. And no wonder! It would tempt a saint. Its beauty is almost uncanny—sinister, I'd call it. Now to business. The wound was bandaged, too, you say. Humph! That's an odd touch—a very odd touch."

"It's rather curious, too," the coroner observed, as he pocketed the ruby, "that a reputable citizen like Conrad should be the victim of such a mess. Ordinary murder is one thing; this case seems to be something more than that. I can't for the life of me understand this ruby business. It's positively extraordinary!"

Inspector Walsh made no reply. He was already busy examining the room with that thoroughness and keenness for detail which had made him famous. In its way, the room was a curiosity by itself. It was furnished as a combination den and study. Bookcases lined three of the walls, a desk stood in one corner, and a reading table occupied the centre of the room. A leather armchair was drawn up near the table, which held an electric reading lamp, a tobacco-jar, half a dozen pipes, and a shallow tray containing a number of cigars and cigarettes. A glass half full of whisky and water stood near the lamp.

The fourth wall of the room, barren of bookcases or pictures, was literally covered with guns. Pistols, revolvers, rifles, shotguns, ancient and modern, small arms of every make and description, all were there, mostly reposing on pegs or hung from hooks. The wall resembled a panel in the trophy room of some national arsenal more than anything else the detective could think of, as for a moment or so he lost himself in contemplation of it. It was a most unusual sight in a private home.

"Conrad was a gun crank, I understand," Dr. Slade offered, noting his companion's gaze. "It was his hobby, you know, just as precious stones are said to be Johnson's. I've heard that he owned one of the best private collections of small arms in the country. Most of these rich men have a hobby of some sort or other. It helps to take up their time, I suppose."

Walsh nodded. "He was shot with one of his own guns, too," he said. "This revolver evidently came from that peg yonder." He indicated an empty space on the wall. "Shows that the murderer didn't come here armed, at any rate; the crime may not have been premeditated. The revolver may help a good bit to solve our riddle — finger prints, you know. The butt is worn smooth; it should test nicely. I'll wrap it up carefully and have it photographed right away. Forty-four calibre: all chambers loaded—one empty shell. Humph!"

He wrapped up the revolver, using a towel obtained from the bathroom across the hall for the purpose, and laid it on the desk. Then he turned his attention to the body on the divan.

"H'm," he muttered, thinking aloud. "Powder marks on his vest. Close work, eh? Some

might call it suicide if it were not for the bandage and the expression on his face, to say nothing of the ruby. It's murder, however. Bloody murder! No accident here. Coat torn at the shoulder, too. A struggle, by George! Humph!

"No sign of a forcible entry, however," he went on, after a moment. "Looks as if the murderer came in by the door. Expected, perhaps. A former friend?. H'm!" He turned to Dr. Slade abruptly.

"Let's have the servant in," he suggested. "He may know something."

Jones appeared, and, though much upset, told his story in a frank, straightforward way. He had been in his present position for years, he said, and he had complete charge of the bungalow. Mr. Conrad had not lived there permanently, he had an apartment in town, but he had been at the house for about a month now. He, Jones, had come into the study, the door of which he had found closed, but not locked, at a little before eight o'clock, to raise the shades and tidy up, as was his daily custom.

He had found one shade up about a third of the way, and the window behind it open the same distance, and, after rolling the shade higher and closing the window, was going to the other window when he noticed the body on the couch. Horrified, he rushed downstairs, and was on his way to a neighbor's to use the telephone—there was no telephone in the house because Mr. Conrad liked to cut himself entirely free from business worries when he came there—when he saw Dr. Slade passing. He happened to know the physician by sight, and he called him into the house.

A few questions drew from him an account of the events of the previous evening. It appeared that Mr. Conrad had been planning a shooting trip which was to have been begun on the following Saturday. He had dined alone at his usual hour and had seemed in excellent spirits. After dinner he had gone to his study to pack for his trip. He had remained alone there all the evening. At ten-thirty Jones had locked up the house and gone to bed in his room on the ground floor at the rear. His master had been alive and well then, he knew, for he spoke to him, bade him good-night, as was his usual custom.

"Did you hear any noise at all during the night?" the detective asked. "Anything that sounded like the report of a gun?"

"No." Jones shook his head. It had already become apparent during the course of the interview that the old man was a little deaf, and it was apparent also that, as is so often the case with deaf people, he did not like to admit his infirmity. Walsh, smiling inwardly at the old fellow's efforts to catch every word correctly, gave no sign that he had guessed his secret.

"Mr. Conrad has owned this house only for about four years. Where did he live before that?"

"In various places, sir. He—we traveled a good deal."

"You were in his service, then, I understand?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I've been with him for over ten years."

"Where did you reside last—just before you came to this country?"

"In Paris, sir."

"And before that?"

"Brussels, sir."

"H'm! Did Mr. Conrad have any enemies? Was there, to your knowledge, any one who might be interested in his death?"

"No, sir. Mr. Conrad was not a sociable gentleman. He had very few visitors of any kind. No enemies at all that I ever heard of. Of course, there were the burglaries; but I don't suppose there was anything personal in them, sir."

"Burglaries, eh! That's interesting. When and where were they?"

"One, the first one, happened about six months ago at the town apartment, sir. The second was last month in this house. It took place one evening while the master and I were away."

"What was stolen?"

"Nothing worth mentioning, sir. I thought it odd at the time that the thieves should go to so much trouble for so little gain, but Mr. Conrad only laughed and said that since they had been so easy on him he would not report the matter to the police. He kept very few valuables here anyhow, except, of course, his guns. They—if I may put it that way, sir—were the apple of his eye, so to speak."

"I see. Now, think carefully, Jones. We had a full moon last night. Don't you remember seeing somebody loitering about—in the garden, perhaps — when you locked up the house?"

Jones scratched his ear and looked thoughtful for a moment. "No, sir, I did not," he answered decidedly. "There wasn't a soul about here at all last evening. I was moving around downstairs all the time until ten-thirty, and I heard or saw nobody."

"H'm!" The detective stroked his chin for a moment, as though he were puzzled, "If that is so," he went on, at length, "how do you account for the fact that somebody got in here? You say that you locked the house, and we know that some one entered this room late in the evening. Mr. Conrad did not kill himself—the evidence we have proves that. Some one shot him, and some one bandaged his wound afterward. You didn't do that, did you?"

"I? No, sir." The old man seemed a little startled at this question. "I knew nothing of the—the accident, sir, until I came upstairs this morning. I never touched the body at all. I heard nothing at all during the night. As for the method of entry, sir, it's possible that the master admitted some visitor himself. That's only a guess, of course, but he might have done so without my knowledge. The outside doors, as you may have noticed, are fitted with spring locks; they would lock automatically if closed from the outside, sir. I found them closed and locked when I made my rounds this morning."

When the servant had gone, Inspector Walsh and Coroner Slade went out into the garden. It was of considerable size, carefully and beautifully planned, attractive even now at a season when few of the flowers were in bloom and many of the trees were bare of foliage.

The two officials walked along a winding path which led from a side door in the house to a little gate in the rustic fence. This gate opened upon a footpath which ran between the Conrad garden and the grounds surrounding a large white house several hundred feet away.

The footpath, deserted for the moment, led between the highway and another main thoroughfare, along which ran the tracks of the interurban line. Since it was still early in the morning few people were about in that quiet residential district.

Walsh stood at the gate and looked about him idly for a minute or two. Finally his eyes focused on the great white house across the way.

"Odd, isn't it," he remarked, "that the Tera Ruby should turn up only a few hundred feet from the place from which it was stolen a year ago? Adrian Johnson would be considerably startled, I dare say, if we entered his breakfast room this morning with our news. He thought a great deal of the ruby, I have heard, far more even than its intrinsic value would mean to a man of his wealth."

"Yes," Dr. Slade agreed. "He's a collector of precious stones, you know. Even so, he didn't make such a tremendous effort to get it back. The matter was dropped rather suddenly, I thought. Only a nominal reward was offered, as I remember it. It's funny how strangely Fate will work at times. Everybody gave the Tera up long ago as gone for good. Odd it should show up like this. In Conrad's body at that! He could hardly have stolen it—he was no thief. It must have been the man who killed him, whoever he is; but that, too, looks improbable. None but a crazy man would make use of a ruby worth a fortune as a murder medium, when an ordinary bullet would do the trick just as well. I must confess that it all is too deep for me."

Inspector Walsh chuckled softly. "It's queer, all right," he admitted readily. "Still, you never can tell, Doctor. Experience has taught me that the stranger the crime, the easier is the solution, if one can only get the right kind of start. Oddities would not be oddities if they were not rare, you know. This case certainly contains exceptional features; no denying that. Hardly a logical clue, so far. With the exception of the revolver and the ruby, and even the gun belonged to the dead man, we have mighty little to work with. There are no tracks, no traces of any kind. Not even a motive, so far as we know now. Of course, the revolver may—probably does—contain digital impressions that may help us. We'll hope so. In the meantime I shall not be idle. A word of warning, Doc-

tor before I forget it: don't mention the ruby, please—not until I give you leave."

The two men had turned back toward the house again, having discovered nothing of importance in the garden, when the detective stopped suddenly.

"Johnson keeps a dog, I see," he remarked, indicating a fine-looking collie which had just run out from the opposite yard into the footpath, and now stood eyeing them inquisitively. "Fine animal, too. I like dogs. Too bad Conrad didn't own one—it might have given the alarm last night."

Dr. Slade moved on without replying. The touch of poetry underlying the character of the little detective, his consuming love of Nature, his moments of almost feminine softness, astonished and mystified him. It was as if a hawk had acquired the utterly useless trick of singing like a canary; and being himself a man wholly of one idea, the coroner could not comprehend it in the smallest degree. Entering the house in advance of his companion, therefore the physician did not see him pause for an instant by the steps of the side door, and he failed to note the gleam in the detective's eyes when he rejoined him in the study.

An hour later Inspector Walsh entered his private room at police headquarters and rang for an assistant, to whom he gave a few terse instructions. Then the detective made his way to Chief Brooks's office to turn in his report.

The chief listened quietly until the other had ended his recital, but at the finish his eyes shone.

"Great Scott!" he breathed. "It all sounds incredible, Jack. It's like a movie plot. Whoever heard of such a thing—a ruby bullet! And the ruby of rubies, at that. Not a single real clue, you say? The devil! We must find a lead somewhere. Perhaps Johnson can help us if we tell him of the ruby. He may have an idea who stole it from him a year ago. I thought at the time that he knew more than he cared to tell, for some reason or other. I'll call him up and make an appointment so we can go right over and——" He was reaching for his telephone, when the detective interposed.

"Just a minute, Chief," he said. "There's no hurry. I'd like to see what the gun has to tell us before I go any further. The ruby is perfectly safe now—it'll keep for a bit. I'd rather not tell any one about it just yet, if you don't mind. You know my way—I never like to talk until I'm sure; but I've got a hunch. I'll get our man, Chief. You can bank on it."

On his way to lunch Chief Brooks stuck his head in at the doorway of Inspector Walsh's room and smiled to himself. His back to the door, the little detective was humped over a mass of papers, which he was studying so intently as to be entirely oblivious of the other's presence. For an instant the Chief stood still, watching him—then suddenly something happened. Walsh stopped his reading and note-taking so abruptly that his pencil was poised in midair. His bowed head was thrown back, his face flushed, and the cigar in his mouth shook visibly. He ran the fingers of one hand through his hair and muttered audibly: "The dog! The dog!" Then he stooped over his papers again and began to scribble rapidly, still without noticing the man in the doorway.

Chief Brooks backed softly out into the hall and continued on his way. As he descended the stairs he racked his thinking apparatus in his efforts to figure out what the detective had been driving at, but without success. "The dog! The dog!" The words meant nothing at all, so far as Brooks could see; but he knew that there must be a connection somewhere. Inspector Walsh never burdened his brain with unnecessary details.

Just before dusk that day Mr. Adrian Johnson left his office in the Coupon-Trust building and started for home. As he walked along the crowded street to the corner where his automobile was waiting for him, he failed to feel the slim fingers of a roughly dressed stranger as they deftly removed his watch from his vest-pocket. It was not until he reached his house that he discovered the theft. When he did so he called up police headquarters and reported it, giving a description of the timepiece and asking the man who took down the message to use every effort toward its recovery. He would have been a much surprised man could he have guessed that the watch was at that very moment lying on Inspector Walsh's desk.

Several days had passed since the discovery of the murder. Phillip Conrad had been buried and his possessions, including the Tera Ruby, had been taken charge of by the authorities until his heirs should appear. The dead man's affairs seemed to be in excellent condition, and the arranging of the estate would be a simple matter. Until the heirs, if there were any, should come forward the downtown apartment and the house at Glenton were sealed by the police. There was nothing further to do for the present, and, so far as was known to the public, the crime was still a complete mystery. The murderer might easily feel that he was absolutely safe by this time.

Almost a week after the murder, on a Monday morning at a little after ten o'clock, Inspector Walsh entered the palatial suite of offices which bore Adrian Johnson's name and requested an interview with the head of the firm.

"Tell Mr. Johnson I am from headquarters," he directed the clerk, who met him at the door. "I've come in regard to a stolen watch."

Johnson looked up eagerly when the detective entered his private office. He was a tall, stout man with a florid face and thin gray hair. Evidently a masterful man, a man accustomed to having his own way in spite of opposition, if one took note of his square jaws and piercing eyes. Just now he appeared to be in a pleasant humor.

"Glad to see you, Inspector," he said cordially. "Sit down. Have a cigar. You've learned something in regard to my watch, I understand?"

"Yes. I have it here, I think." Walsh took a small paper parcel from his pocket and handed it to the millionaire. "It answers the description you gave us all right, but I thought I'd bring it over so you can identify it."

"Good! You've certainly lost no time running it down. I was afraid it had gone for good, too. I'm mighty glad you were able to locate it. Pawnshop, I suppose? I've carried it for years."

Johnson quickly slipped the rubber band which was around the package and loosened its covering. Within was a square cardboard box. Opening this, the millionaire shot a quick glance inside and jerked upright suddenly, to stare at the detective with eyes that held a blended expression of amazement and something much akin to fear.

"The ruby!" he gasped. "The Tera! Good God!"

"Exactly." Inspector Walsh smiled oddly. "I gave you the wrong box purposely, Mr. Johnson. Your watch is perfectly safe, however. In fact, it never was actually stolen—merely taken out of your possession temporarily by my orders. Here it is." He slipped the solid gold repeater out of his pocket and laid it on the desk.

Johnson stared at him dumfounded. His face was ghastly. Great beads of sweat sprang out upon his forehead and began to run down his cheeks. For an instant it seemed as though he might have a stroke. Suddenly he found his tongue.

"Where—where did you get it?" he demanded. "Where did you find it?"

"The doctor found it," Walsh answered, still smiling, and watching the millionaire with almost catlike intensity. "It was in, or near, Philip Conrad's heart."

"In Conrad's heart! Great Lord Almighty!" Johnson gasped and fought for air like a stranded fish, and his features became, if possible, even more ghastly than before. "What do you mean, man? This is no time to joke."

"I was never more serious in my life, Mr. Johnson," the detective returned. "I have told you the simple truth. The ruby was taken out of the wound in Philip Conrad's breast. It's the thing that killed him."

"The devil it is!" For a minute or two longer Adrian Johnson stared at the quiet little man across the desk from him with searching eyes. Then, seemingly because of something he saw in the detective's face, he pulled himself together and picked up a cigar. He lighted it with fumbling fingers, sucked in a mouthful of the rich smoke, and settled back in his chair.

"Well," he said, and his voice carried an ugly note, "you've guessed it, I see; though Heaven knows how you did it. Now, what are you going to do about it?"

"My duty," Walsh answered, succinctly. "But first, if you don't mind, I'd like a little explanation from you. As you said, I've

guessed it; I know enough to make it unnecessary for you to tell me more; but a few minor points are rather vague. I hope you'll clear them up for me."

"That remains to be seen. First, you must tell me what you know. Why have you come to me as you have? I'm admitting nothing, mind—not yet!"

"Still stubborn, eh?" Inspector Walsh grinned amiably. "Well, I admire grit in a man, Mr. Johnson, and I don't blame you for playing safe. It really wasn't so very hard, you know. For one thing, you overlooked the fact that your past associations with Conrad were sure to come out. Ten years or so isn't so very long, you know, and when my investigations showed me that you two had been friends in Europe once upon a time, although you were—so far as any one knew—scarcely more than speaking acquaintances here, I began to smell a mouse. The ruby helped immensely, too; gave me a starting point, as it were. Then there were finger impressions on that revolver, several of 'em. By a trick I got hold of your watch and compared a thumb mark I found on it with one on the gun. That clinched matters. It would have been enough to bring me here; even without the evidence furnished by the dog."

"The dog?"

"Yes. That pretty collie of yours. He followed you into Conrad's garden that night—the night of your quarrel—and laid down to wait for you on the steps at the side door. Those long-coated dogs *will* shed their hair, you know, and our California nights are damp. The steps were covered with dew. Moisture acts as a good retaining medium for hair, and—well, I easily discovered where the dog had been lying. A few careful questions told me that the dog had never been seen to enter Conrad's yard alone, so it was easy for me to deduce that he must have followed some member of your family. When I considered the ruby and the thumb marks on the revolver I had to proceed only one step further to conclude that you were Conrad's visitor. You know the rest of it, I think. It's all perfectly clear except one point — the ruby. Was it hidden in that cartridge case by Conrad, or did you——?"

Johnson laughed hoarsely. It was a ghastly laugh, as ghastly as the face which stared at the detective from behind a screen of cigar smoke; but for a little he said nothing. He seemed to be collecting himself. Suddenly he leaned forward.

"That man Conrad was a hound!" he burst out savagely. "I didn't kill him—not willfully at least—although God knows he deserved death if a man ever did. He stole the Tera in the first place, somewhere in Spain, I think it was, and he sold it to me when we met later on in Paris. Years later—last year, to be exact, here in this very city—he stole the ruby back again, and held me up afterwards. He said I'd have to pay for it all over again, call off the police who were investigating the robbery and all that, or he'd sell the stone elsewhere, and show me up for a receiver of stolen goods.

"Well, I let him bluff me. I have a family, you see; I'm a man of position, and I didn't want to be shown up. I bought and paid for that ruby a second time, Inspector. Paid a small fortune, at that. Oh, yes, I was a fool! I know that well enough. Of course I was a fool. But I loved that ruby. I love it yet. It was the gem of my collection, and I've got some mighty fine stones. I bought it and paid for it for the second time about eight months ago, and Conrad tricked me once more. Yes, sir, he tricked me, by God! Instead of handing the original Tera over to me as he agreed, he fooled me with a clever imitation. He kept the genuine stone, the dog!

"Twice since then I've had his apartments searched—it doesn't matter by whom—and it was a good job, but we didn't find the ruby. If I'd only known what a crank he was about guns—but I never thought of the thing being inside a loaded cartridge. The idea was too clever. Too damnably clever!

"That night, the night of the killing, I went to him determined to make him disgorge somehow or know the reason why. But even then I had no thought of murder, Inspector. I wasn't even armed! He knew I was coming, I'd sent him word, and he let me in at the side door about midnight. His servant and my family had retired, so the coast was clear. He had been getting ready for one of his damned shooting trips—one of the dozens of

revolvers he owned lay on the desk. He had been drinking, too, and he was in an ugly mood.

"Well, we talked a while and before long we both became angry. He taunted me at first; then he threatened me. Said I'd never see the Tera again, and all that. Finally, he looked toward the gun on the desk. I thought he meant to pick it up and shoot me, and I closed with him. I was the stronger man, but he struggled like a fiend, and somehow the revolver went off. He fell badly hurt. I knew he was dying, but I tried to bind up his wound. Then he died."

"And you — what did you do then?" Inspector Walsh asked, after a short pause. "Why didn't you make a clean breast of the whole story? If the facts were as you say, and I believe you, for the evidence backs you up to a certain extent, why didn't you speak out?"

"I was rattled, I guess," Johnson confessed. "I never thought of finger prints and such things—I thought I could cover it up. Conrad and I were not known to be on visiting terms, no one had seen me enter the house, and the gun, muffled against his chest, had not made much noise. He was always fooling with weapons, and I put the revolver near his hand and went home."

GREAT WAR TAUGHT VALUE OF WOOD

NOT until the United States sent 2,000,000 of her sons to France was the importance of forestry appreciated as it relates to war. The greatest forestry lesson in the history of the world was taught in the camps and on the firing lines. "It would not be a difficult thing to convince any member of the A. E. F. that wood is a vital part of the national defence and indispensable in the achievement of victory in war," said a member of the faculty of the New York State College of Forestry at the Cranberry Lake summer camp recently.

It would be impossible to defend ourselves against military attack without forests as it would be without powder. Our record as an undefeated nation could not have been attained without trees and plenty of them. As much as any other agency trees have won and have maintained our independence. What would the Allies have done if France had not conserved her forests and long ago planted her denuded lands with trees?

The bridges, the batons, the trussing and buttresses of the trenches and dugouts, the barracks, the great warehouses, the fires that warmed the billets and hospitals and over which the army food was cooked, the railroad ties, telegraph poles, entanglement stakes, camouflage pickets, docks, corduroy roads and cars and ships, all were products of the forest.

A ton and a half of wood was used for every American soldier that went overseas. More than 450,000,000 board feet of timber and more than 650,000 cords of fuel wood had to be produced. In the St. Mihiel offensive 70,000,000 board feet of timber were needed every thirty days. About thirty-one thousand men in the American army were employed in connection with the manufacture and supply of these great quantities of wood in France. Twenty-seven large mills and sixty small mills were cutting 2,000,000 board feet of lumber every day at the time the armistice was signed. With these facts in mind every American purely as a matter of patriotism should become a forest conservation fan for life.

Queer Bugs

AS is well known, the scarabæus, or beetle, was worshiped by the ancient Egyptians, and was considered sacred to various deities. It was represented on monuments, in hieroglyphic writing, and engraved on royal escutcheons.

The sacred beetle of the Nile performs a most arduous task to protect its eggs. It bestows its care upon one egg at a time, but their care is constant until the egg is protected. As soon as it has laid an egg, it places it in some soft substance and then forms it into a regular ball which it rolls about in every direction on the soft sand, until it has become smooth, round and hard. When the ball is completed, the beetle pushes it into a hole which has been dug for the purpose, and leaves the egg to its fate.

Earthen images of it, as well as of other animal forms, were entombed along with mummies to keep evil spirits from the dead. Its figure was cut upon gems and worn in jewelry as a talisman to keep the wearer from harm. The insect was embalmed after death and given honorable burial. Engraven on the emerald, the scarabæus was a remedy against witchcraft and headache, and quite likely also to bring its possessor into favor with the king.

It is not surprising to find that the curious insect known as the firefly has been regarded with superstitious awe by various savage tribes. The natives of West India and other warm countries, however, are said to put the flies to a very practical use. They capture them in large numbers, and, putting them in cages of wire, twenty or thirty together, keep them alive by feeding them, and use them at night to light their houses and save candles. If the light grows dim the insects are wet, and their cage shaken up, causing them to shine brightly again. The ladies pin large numbers of these creatures, alive, to ballroom dresses, and wear them as ornaments.

The little insect known as the "death-watch" is a very common pest of libraries, and frequently perforates huge volumes with straight tiny holes. Its presence in a house is supposed to portend an early death to some of the inmates. Watchers by sick beds and suffering patients have been so terrified by its uncanny ticking sound, heard in the silence of the night, that nothing could convince them that the death angel was not almost in their presence. If there were anything in the superstition, those whose dwellings are old would lead but brief and uncomfortable lives, for it is frequently the case during the summer time that the noise of this insect can be heard at almost any hour of the day and night in all parts of the house.

The earwig, a small, winged insect, commonly found in moist earth and damp places in England, is another harmless creature, which has got a hard name through no fault of its own. Although there are no authentic cases on record of this insect injuring any human being, there is a widespread, popular belief that it only watches for an opportunity to creep into the ear of a sleeping person, destroy his hearing, and drive him to madness if not to death.

A young insect generally presents itself in the form of a worm, which the name of larva or mask is given—this is probably an ingenious reminder that the worm is a kind of disguise under which is hidden the brilliant livery of the perfect insect. The larva does nothing but eat and grow. When it has grown long enough it shrivels up, casts off its skin, takes on a new form and becomes motionless. It is at this stage of life that the name of nymph is given to it.

Many insects obtain their living solely by hunting.

The life of insects presents many variations which are not seen in the animal creation; totally different habits being met with in kinds that appear otherwise to be almost identical.

THE HAND

by Orrin Simons

(Author of "The Great Hindoo Ruby"—Prize Story.)

Fanciful and grotesque stories of purely the imaginative kind are sometimes intensely interesting. "The Hand" makes no pretension of a scientific basis; it was merely a peculiar idea, developed into story form to amuse its author, but possesses sufficient fiction merit to warrant its publication.

—*The Editor.*

IT was after mounting three flights of stairs to the top floor of Mrs. Menotti's boarding house that you found yourself at the door of the room occupied by Harold Lake, medical student. The last flight leading to this unattractive spot was uncarpeted and worn by several generations of feet. Cracked, dusty walls and soiled paint, a general air of neglect, were gaily illumined by a skylight of many-colored glass. Of the two apartments at either end of the hall that to the front was Lake's. Here some slight effort at cheerfulness was attempted by a couple of neatly framed photographs and others unframed, a gaudy brass bed, a table strewn with magazines and papers, two chairs advanced into old age, and a stand of books, the kind that were evidently intended for practical use.

The main sort of decoration, that included a collection of pipes and tobacco and a group of various sized and shaped chemical bottles, was topped off by a small keg with a wooden lid inscribed on the side with the name of a well-known salt, which stood snugly beside the bureau. The mansard roof was responsible for a slanting wall facing the street which was pierced by one window too near the floor to properly illumine the room with its high ceiling or to adequately ventilate the place. To complete the picture and give a final touch of sprightliness, and to assure one of the occupant's profession, a grinning, human skull, wearing a checked golf cap tilted jauntily over one eye socket, held serene and isolated sway on top of the stand of books.

There was something pathetic about it all, a boyish effort to be manly, and such an utter lack of home atmosphere about it. Hot in summer, cold in winter, and always permeated with the odor of chemicals, it probably seemed cheerful enough to young Lake when, after a hard day's work at the college or hospital, he climbed the three long flights of stairs and was free to pursue any of his hobbies with his bosom friend, Victor Trochu, who spent many evenings with him. Here they labored at hopeless experiments involving strange smelling chemicals, and filled the hours with youthful and ambitious projects for revolutionizing the pharmaceutical world. Here odd volumes with shabby covers were lugged, to be displayed with glowing pride, or, on such evenings as the young student spent by himself, to be studied with deep absorption. Here, too, the heteroclitical collec-

tion of bottles had made its appearance singly and in twos and threes, filled with chemicals in liquid or solid form, to be stored in such unsightly fashion, though with strict injunction to the tow-headed Swedish maid that they should remain undisturbed when the bed was made and the place perfunctorily tidied in the morning.

The two young men had read with keen interest reports of the work of the Rockefeller Institute, where remarkable researches had been undertaken with such astonishing results. When Dr. ———'s announcement of flesh culture was heralded abroad, Lake was especially interested and by dint of untiring effort was able to secure the formula whereby the growth of cells had become an accomplished fact under certain treatment of flesh taken from living patients. The uncanny discovery filled his mind with schemes far outstripping the possible, as is often the case where advances of this character have been made. His thoughts ran on till the rebuilding of life itself seemed almost a certainty. When these ambitions were confided to his friend, Victor Trochu, the young Frenchman's native enthusiasm was at once enlisted in support of the project and plans were formed for pushing their investigations into undiscovered fields. Many discouraging trials were made with little or no result. A skeleton of a hand was secured with the intention of restoring it to a condition of life, but these initial efforts only resulted in the destruction of the bone, which became finally reduced to a chalky mess.

And so it was that one night they sat on either side of the small table gazing in baffled discouragement at the wreck of their hopes.

At length Trochu broke the silence. "No use," he said, "it can't be done."

"Not along the lines we have followed," returned his host, "but we've only begun. Do you suppose many of the world's great discoveries and inventions were accomplished without tremendous effort? It's never admitting failure that does it." Lake's voice rang with the devotion of a fanatic. There was but one end for him; ultimate success.

"Perhaps you think of something we have not tried. We have only destroyed, not restored something. We make not one inch of progress to encourage us."

"True, it has been failure so far, but we may have aimed too high. We know now, at least, that most of our efforts were doomed beforehand; that the chemicals used as we combined them were wofully wrong. I suggest that we now try experimenting with a hand in its natural state."

Trochu's interest had evidently flagged. Satirically he replied: "You would make it grow—come to life. You should graft it on your back—er—what you call behindhand," and he laughed loudly at his joke, slapping his knee and rocking to and fro.

Lake grinned at his friend's suggestion and also at his evident enjoyment of it. "Wouldn't be such a bad idea," he said. "Think of being able to scratch one's back without going through all the usual contortions. To be sure, it would spoil the fit of one's coat, but there would be many compensations."

"I should then carry my two valises with still a hand for my umbrella," Trochu continued, and once more burst into a fit of merriment.

Lake waited till his friend calmed down and then replied: "No doubt greater things than you have imagined will be accomplished some day, but, to return to the present, it occurs to me that I have not yet shown you the book I brought home Saturday night. I picked it up in a second-hand store on Fourth Avenue and spent almost the whole of yesterday absorbed in its unusual conceptions. You will surely find the work interesting, as it refers to experiments closely allied to our own efforts, and, too, it is by one of your own nationality." Lake stepped over to the bookcase, returning with a heavy volume which he opened on the table.

Trochu rose to look over his friend's shoulder. "Ah, Jean Finot; yes, yes; I have heard of him many times—a very keen mind, a deep thinker. This book I have never read, but I shall ask you to lend it to me."

"You shall have it, but now listen to these paragraphs which I have selected, feeling sure they would be of especial interest to you, though I admit they are of no practical value —but you shall judge for yourself." Lake turned to where one of several cards had been

inserted and read aloud, Trochu meanwhile returning to his chair, which he tipped back against the wall.

"'Brown Sequard, having one day cut off the head of a dog brought up in his own laboratory, called it by its name. The eyes of the bleeding head, which was no longer a part of the body, turned toward the celebrated physician, as if his voice had been recognized by the faithful animal.' And here is another paragraph still more to the point." Without waiting for any comment, he continued: "'By injecting fresh blood into the head of a recently decapitated criminal, Charles Robins tells us, a momentary resurrection of the vital harmony may be caused. Brown Sequard believed the operation to be practicable, but he was right to recoil before the tortures which the horrible consciousness of its situation must cause to the fragment of body.'"

Victor leaned forward, his eyes glowing with excitement. "No sacrifice is too great in the cause of science. It should be tried."

"The experiment would be easier in France where criminals meet their fate by the guillotine. In this country such an object would be almost impossible to obtain. I agree with you that any possible lead should be given a chance, no matter what suffering was involved. I would be willing, aye, eager, to offer myself as a subject where the thing to be attempted held out a fair hope of success. But to return once more to 'The Philosophy of Long Life.' I have selected still another paragraph which I should like you to hear as it offers a generally encouraging thought." While speaking Lake turned to the pages once more to where the last of the cards had been placed.

"'Death,' he read, 'as we fear it, is but an empty word. Above it lies the law of the conservation of matter, an immortal law, the law of life. Its principle once realized in the world with the first cell (protoplasm or plastidule) it has served as a starting-point for all varieties of organic being which people the earth. The first germ thus becoming eternal in its essence, for it is always the same life that continues.'"

"The cells, yes — the cells," Victor exclaimed, his voice rising to a higher pitch. "Life goes on without end. Yes, yes! It is the living cells." Trochu's interest thus once more aroused, the conversation turned to a serious consideration of plans for beginning on the new line at their next meeting later in the week. The object for their new experiment was easily obtained and once again chemicals were combined in ways most offensive to the olfactory nerve. Fortunately indeed Lake's amateur laboratory was next the roof where, besides themselves, only good-natured Hilda was the victim. Her stolid complaints were all in Swedish, so that their true import was never discovered. But still, in spite of some very startling mixtures, strong enough to raise the roof yet not the dead, their fleshy hand went the way of its predecessor. As Trochu had said, it couldn't be done, though Lake, with his unquenchable perseverance, was sure it was just a matter of the right combination; but then, so many things in chemistry depend upon that simple little point. A single drop of cyanide will spoil the soup, and so on.

When hope of success was nearly as dead as the subject of their experiments, Trochu was called away to be gone a couple of weeks. Left to himself, Lake laid aside the subject for several days, till, through some chance in the dissecting room at college, a hand of unusual character came into his possession almost as though defying him to try again. The prehensile tendency of this new specimen appealed to his imagination and he found himself speculating as to the disposition and appearance of its former owner. The skin was dark and yellowish, probably of Moorish or Turkish origin, one finger showing the mark of a ring. The nails, long and strong, suggested a man of powerful build and tenacious grip. Lake's ever active imagination pictured a swarthy, turbanned head with dark, fierce, piercing eyes shaded by black, overhanging brows; a long, flat nose under which a strong growth of beard and mustache only half concealed cruel and sneering lips. The neck supporting this head must have been big and muscular, the torso and limbs trained free of all superfluous flesh. How came he to lose his hand—the right one, too? Was he still living? Lake's imagery galloped on, but he found necessity for editing the supposition of a turban, as the hand, being fresh, must

have parted company with its owner here in the city or near by, perhaps in a brawl in some dive—but no, this was all nonsense. How could it have found its way into the dissecting room under such circumstances? Consistency be hanged! The Moor or Turk, or whatever son of Cain he might have been, must have come to America on a trail of revenge. He had perchance found Nemesis for himself instead of playing the title role. And, if so, might not the dark and embittered soul be beating itself against the prison bars that divide this world from the next in impotent wrath at its baffled aims? The picturesque costume must perforce be laid aside, but still the dark, cruel face with its steady gaze continued to haunt Lake's mind, almost startling him into a consciousness of a living presence. With a feeling of incipient apprehension he looked furtively around the room, which was lighted by only a lamp standing on the bureau and casting a giant reflection of the young student on the opposite wall. It seemed as though the gruesome object was having a hypnotic influence on him, or perhaps the steady pour of rain on the roof was responsible for the depressing effect. He sprang to his feet, giving his shoulders a shake as though to throw off a chill, though the night was humid and enervating. Pacing rapidly up and down, he finally stooped to look out of the window, primarily to change the tenor of his thoughts. An occasional flash of heat lightning lit up the façades of the unprepossessing buildings opposite, the rain streaming down into the deserted street below. So lacking in cheer was the outlook that he quickly lowered the shade and returned to the table where the hand lay strongly outlined by black shadows cast by the rays of the lamp. Overcoming an unusual feeling of repugnance he placed the thing in a large tin basin and stood looking down on it with feelings closely akin to disgust and with an utter lack of interest.

"If it wasn't for the storm," he thought, "I'd cheer myself up with a good show. If only Victor were here now I might stir up his lively enthusiasm with this new subject, but working all alone way up here in this cheerless room somehow palls on me tonight. If only some one would come in."

A glass jar into which various concoctions had been poured from previous experiments attracted his attention, and he stooped to raise it from the floor. "Here, gloomy hand, see how you'll like this," he said aloud, and forthwith poured the contents into the basin, setting the empty vessel on the bureau.

Seen through the blood-red solution, it took on a still more sinister aspect, the impression of the baleful, steady eyes of the Oriental returning with redoubled force. They seemed to be behind him—just at his shoulder—the conviction so strong that, with a quickening of the heart he faced abruptly about, but aside from an open closet door, which he was sure he had left closed, there was nothing to cause such a state of nervous excitement. Annoyed at his weakness, he was still enough under the influence of this unreasonable fear to close the closet door, even to lock it, and then resolutely turned his attention once more to the bowl, absently noting the perfect reflection of the lamp, his thoughts for the moment gloomily abstracted.

Suddenly a remarkable thing happened or seemed to happen. The claw-like fragment apparently moved. Again Lake's heart gave a jump and his flesh seemed to creep all down his back and at the roots of his hair. He bent forward with wildly staring eyes, scarcely breathing. Had some action developed at last? A queer, nervous tremor ran through the hand, the fingers slowly, quiveringly, stretched out stiffly, then drew in again to a fist, the meat and cords moving queerly at the end where they had been severed. Then the nails began rapidly tapping and scratching on the bottom of the basin, disturbing the liquid in which it was submerged.

For a brief instant Harold glanced at his reflection in the mirror over the bureau, and was conscious of his white face and unusual expression. It wasn't a nightmare, then. But in that short moment the prehensile hand had become alarmingly active, and was moving about in the basin like some benighted crab. A second later it clawed its way up over the edge of the basin and flopped, with a splash, onto the top of the table. At this juncture all scientific interest fled from Lake's mind and in its place panicky fear possessed him. A short, slim cane stood in the corner of the room. It was of bamboo and curved at the

end. With an energy inspired by his highly wrought state of mind, he made one quick leap for it and with the crooked end swept the dreadful object onto the floor, where it fell like a lump of putty, spattering chemicals over the rug. The next moment in his frenzy he would have stamped on it with his heel, but the hand, too quick for him, had, in a flash, seized the end of the cane and was clawing its way up toward him with surprising energy and agility. Under these trying conditions his mind worked with unusual alertness. To drop the cane would leave his strange foe free to leap at him from the floor, or perhaps to come gripping its way up his leg.

The keg by the bureau! It had no more than occurred to him than he acted upon the thought, flinging cane and hand together into it, and the next instant had clapped on the wooden top and, as an added precaution, weighted this with a heavy dictionary.

Perspiration was running down his face as he dropped onto the edge of the bed, suddenly aware of abnormal weakness in his knees. He could hear the horrible thing scrambling and scratching about in the keg, but it was safely caged now. What a wonderful thing he had done! The world would echo with this most astonishing achievement. How had it been accomplished? Alas, the combination in the jar was as unknown to him as the cause of its action, but it could be analyzed. To make sure of preserving the solution he poured it back into the glass jar, clumsily refitting the cover with nerves so strained it was no wonder some portion of the ruddy mixture was spilled.

Would the hand retain its active powers till the morning? No one would believe his story without actual evidence and perhaps the experiment would fail upon repetition. For a moment he considered a journey to the home of the clinical doctor, which, though at some distance, could be reached in half an hour by the elevated road, but doubts as to the advisability of such a course deterred him. Probably his tale would be doubted—disbelieved—and the night was stormy and growing worse, the rain now swishing mournfully against the window-pane, driven by a feverish east wind. Perhaps, too, if the doctor consented to return with him, action might have ceased, the chemical lost its power. Yet he went so far as to raise the shade only to discover gusty splashes of wet obliterating the view, setting a final seal to his decision to remain within.

A desire for one more look at the hand tempted him to move the lid a little to one side so that a slant of lamplight fell within the keg. He could just discern the thing squeezed into a fist and rhythmically clenching and unclenching, showing the lines of tightening and relaxing cords along its back.

It was a long while before he felt sufficiently calm to prepare for bed, his mind seething with ambitious projects, his name to be heralded even to the home town in the middle West where he had first seen the light of day. Would not his relatives and friends be proud of him! Fortune must surely follow. And Victor? He would always regret being called away so inopportunely just as success was to crown the patient months of experiment. But Lake would see to it that his friend should share in the glory.

Surely the powerful combination of chemicals that could redivify one small portion of a human body might perform still greater miracles, and so, building castles of most elaborate design, he fell asleep, soothed by the constant roar of the pelting rain on the roof.

It may have been the heavy, reverberating crash of thunder or the bright flashes of lightning, or again the gale that shook the house as the storm reached its height, or it may have been the awful dream that seemed such a reality to Lake, that finally brought him back to consciousness. In his nightmare he was struggling through cold, black mud, in some dark and stifling place, each step carrying him deeper till it seemed he must soon be submerged and perish ere help could reach him. He was up to his shoulders now, his arms bound by it, and still he sank, unable to utter a sound, a smothering sensation of oppression that resisted every move holding him helpless. Now it was up to his neck, and each breath was drawn with increasing difficulty, till, by a supreme effort, he threw off the bedclothes and struggled to a sitting position to find the choking a reality. In a flash

the experience of the evening sped before him. The hand, the awful, horrible hand! It was at his throat, the strong, sinewy fingers pressed in tightly and with murderous intent. Clutching and tearing at it, he struggled to his feet, lurching heavily against the bureau with such force that the lamp and his precious jar of chemicals fell to the floor and were smashed to pieces. He got hold of the evil thumb and tried to work the hand loose in this way, or at least allow space for air to his lungs.

What frightful power was this that could lend such strength to so small a thing as though the whole person of its owner were recalled to life to aid in this deadly, hateful struggle? He tried to call out, to reach the door, but his senses were leaving him. There in the dark, with no one to help him, he was doomed to meet this awful fate. No human being would ever know what had happened. It would always remain an astounding mystery.

Yet help was to come. Fortunately for Lake, Hilda, in her room at the other end of the hall, was awakened by the storm and had heard the crash of glass and the queer squeaks of sound that had issued from his throat in spasmodic efforts to call for help. She was a good-hearted creature and secretly admired the young student. Having hastily lit her lamp, she wrapped a thin plaid shawl about her shoulders and, opening the door, stood there to assure herself of the cause of such unusual sounds. Yes, they undoubtedly came from Mr. Lake's room. She hurried along the short hall, calling his name at the door. His thick, labored breathing could be distinguished in spite of the roaring clamor of the storm, but no answer came from within. Knocking and repeating her call several times without result, she turned the knob and stepped into the room. A sense of some unknown horror sent a sudden chill through the girl, but her courage was strong enough to resist the temptation to flee. Holding the lamp high, its rays fell on Lake, revealing his almost purple face, the strange hand at his throat, and his own hands struggling for relief. The uncanny horror, the supernatural mystery of what she beheld, was too much for Hilda, and, uttering a piercing shriek, she fell to the floor, her lamp, the chimney spattered to fragments, rolling across the rug, still sending forth a smoky, murky flame.

If either of these two young people had been in possession of their normal senses, what followed might easily have been avoided, the small flame extinguished ere the dripping oil had led the fire to the rug. For a little it burned slowly, but the covers of the bed were partly dragged to the floor and the fire unfortunately led in that direction, so that a leaping, flickering blaze was soon on its way to the mattress.

The first light of day was just creeping in at the window as an alarm clock in the room below, occupied by an old fellow who had an early morning job, began its insistent burr, awakening him to yawning consciousness. As he dressed the smell of smoke assailed his nostrils, till, sniffing inquisitively, he presently carried his investigations to the hall where conditions were much worse. As the cause was evidently from the floor above, he climbed the stairs at his best pace and almost stumbled over the prostrate form of Hilda as he stepped across the threshold of the front room. Flames were mounting high from the foot of the bed and had just caught the curtain in their devouring power. So much smoke choked the air that it was impossible to discover the situation, but he was at least able to make out Lake's figure on the bed and the girl stretched out on the floor. Choking, he reached forward and seized the student by his shoulder, dragging him to an upright position.

Whatever the cause will never be known, but the diabolical power of the bewitched fragment of Oriental humanity departed as suddenly as it came, and when Lake struggled through to consciousness it was lying on the floor beside his flaming bed with not the slightest sign of activity.

Though weakened by his ordeal, he was able to help carry Hilda from the room and down the worn steps, but she, too, came to herself as they reached the lower floor, and when she was made to realize the state of affairs in the room above and a modest confusion over her scant attire had overcome her, was insistent to return to her room. This neither of the men would permit, and in the meantime other tenants and finally the worn, thin figure of Mrs. Minotti were hastening

to the scene of the fire. The maid was sent below, some one rescued most of her clothes and still another thoughtful individual had summoned the aid of the fire department.

By the efficient aid of the best fire department in the world, the conflagration was confined to the upper floor, though Lake's room was gutted, all his precious books and chemicals destroyed.

Hilda, upon being questioned the next day, seemed to have no recollection of the hand. The sounds of breaking glass, Lake's strange cries for help, and the thunderstorm were all that she remembered.

Victor Trochu, to whom he confided his strange adventures, advised secrecy, cautioning his friend that the story, unsubstantiated would not be believed, in fact might be ridiculed.

Perhaps Trochu in his innermost consciousness decided Lake's adventure to have been really a nightmare, superinduced by overapplication and the depressing effect of the storm.

But Lake knew better.

(Our next number will contain another story of the above type.)

SPIDERS AS ARCHITECTS

NO one who has spent much time in the country can have failed to observe and admire the beautiful webs of the little garden spider. These webs, circular in outline, with radiating threads running from centre to circumference and supporting a system of concentric lines, are regarded by naturalists as the highest architectural achievements of spiders.

The maker of the web sits at its centre, where the slightest vibration caused by the struggles of an entangled victim is instantly felt.

The great ingenuity and perfection of these geometrical webs naturally give rise to the question, how did the spider learn the art of making them? The naturalist is not satisfied with the reply that it is a matter of instinct. He finds that there are wide differences among the webs of different spiders, and his observations lead him to think that he can discern distinct progress in the art of webmaking among spiders.

The common house spider spins a web quite different from that of the garden spider. The house spider's web consists of a silken tube hidden in a dark corner, with an irregular sheet of closely woven meshes spread before it. The tube is the spider's lurking hole and place of refuge; the outspread web is its snare.

The wolf spider makes a tubular hole with a hinged door for a refuge, and spreads no snare. Still another species of spider constructs a far simpler tube of silk without any lid or door.

Now, according to the view of more than one authority, these different kinds of webs or nests represent so many stages of development. It is thought that at the beginning the only kind of web that any spider knew how to spin was a simple cocoon intended to protect its eggs.

Then a web for the protection of the spider itself from its enemies was woven around the cocoon. This web had an opening for ingress and egress, and such webs, intended for use only during the time that the eggs are hatching are still spun by some species of spiders.

The next step was the development of a snare. It has been suggested that this may have resulted from the accidental spinning of threads over and around the opening of a tubular retreat surrounding a cocoon. This was further developed in the outspread net of the house spider, and it reached its highest form when the garden spider learned to construct its beautiful radiated web.

One may trace in all this some resemblance to the progress of architecture among men. The earliest representatives of the human race were content to dwell in caves and rudely constructed huts. And to-day there are savage tribes which have not advanced much further in this respect.

Turning Stone Into Candy

BUZZARD ROOST, as its name implies, is high up among the mountains in that weird, wild portion of Western North Carolina christened so appropriately "the land of the sky." Mount Mitchell, now known to be the highest point east of the Rocky Mountains — not excepting Mount Washington — towers among the clouds not far away, surrounded by a blue mist or haze, while the French Broad River, called by the Indians "Merry Water," laughs and babbles and dashes along merrily at its feet. Buzzard Roost is not a bustling "mart of trade"; on the contrary, the town consists of one house, which does duty as post-office, railroad ticket office, store and dwelling. There are two mails daily at Buzzard Roost, and this serves to divert the population of the place—which consists of the postmaster and his wife. Once in a while a man comes here to fish or hunt, upon which occasion the town puts on its gala dress and does its best to be entertaining and hospitable.

Half a mile from Buzzard Roost, way up among the mountains, is a mine. The owners don't say much about it, nor do they appear to be anxious for visitors to go there; nevertheless, the mine is one of the most curious affairs in the country — the only one of its kind, it is to be hoped, in the world. The material mined here is a peculiar kind of white rock which the miners say has no name, so they have very appropriately called it "Deception Rock." Its uses are varied and its value is so great that the mine and the works near by pay a good dividend upon the money invested. The rock is mined in great pieces or chunks, which are loaded upon wheelbarrows and taken to a large wooden chute, where they are dumped. This wooden chute runs down the precipitous side of the mountain and ends at "the mills." The rock in its rapid transit through the large trough becomes reduced to small pieces or lumps about the size of cocoanuts. These are gathered up by the workmen, and when the rock comes from the mills it is reduced to a soft white powder, which is put in barrels and shipped to New York, where it sells for from $3 to $3.50 a barrel.

The uses to which this powdered rock is put are many. The coarser quality, especially that which contains small portions of mica, is used to adulterate granulated sugar. It is said to be excellent for this purpose, since nearly 20 per cent may be mixed with the pure sugar without fear of detection. Still another and finer grade of the powder is made, and this is used exclusively in the manufacture of candies.

Since the introduction of this powder about 37 years ago it has largely superseded "terra-alba," which was formerly used in the manufacture of candies — especially in those brands known as the "cheap French mixed."

The mill and mine together have a capacity of about 300 barrels of this compound per week, all of which is shipped direct to New York, where it is disposed of to the various dealers who choose to use it.

Just as luck would have it, as I boarded the train after leaving this mine at Buzzard Roost, I met one of the most prominent candy manufacturers in Atlanta.

"Terra-alba is no longer used by respectable candy men," said he, in reply to my questions, "but it is hard to get confectioners' sugar nowadays that has not been adulterated either with terra-alba or this powdered rock, the latter being most used now. Terra-alba formerly was used in cheap candies, but the manufacturers of that class of goods now use this powder, as it is cheaper and less dangerous. Terra-alba hardens in the stomach in a lump, but this new powder seems to go through the system generally, causing, I believe, many a case of Bright's Disease."

The CRIMSON POMPON

by

Caroline Bingold

IT was ten o'clock at night when Marie Gerand ascended the concrete steps winding up the precipitous rocks of the Weehawken Palisades that led from the roadway below to the Boulevard on the cliff. A dense fog filled the atmosphere and Marie trembled with fear as she ran from one landing to another. On reaching the last step, she was forced to stop. A sharp pain darted through her heart and she panted for breath as she clung to the railing.

The girl knew it was foolish to race up the hundreds of steps as she had, but she was afraid. The leaping of the water against the shore below had always seemed like music to her ears, but to-night it irritated her and she wished the fog bell that sounded across the river would cease. Its mournful toll filled her with dread.

The home of Cecil Margrave, where Marie served as Mrs. Margrave's maid, was only a few yards away. It was built right out on the gigantic rocks of the Palisades and Marie had often wondered whether there was a possibility of it ever tumbling down to the railroad tracks that ran along the shore of the Hudson River.

The maid peered in the direction of the house, but on account of the heavy fog she could hardly make out its irregular outline. Her breathing was regular now, so she made her way to the iron gate that was set in the centre of a high wall that surrounded the garden. Lifting the latch, the maid went in, then quickly and quietly slipped into the house.

Marie had no more than closed the door when she heard an angry growl. "Down, Bruno," she commanded. The growl was changed to a whine as the girl felt the black mastiff's head under her hand. Patting him gently, Marie continued: "What's the matter, Bruno? Were you left alone? Poor boy——"

Bruno darted off to the end of the hall. Marie was somewhat surprised at the dog's strange action, then she became aware of something stranger. The door leading to Cecil Margrave's den was standing partly open. This had never happened before. Margrave always kept the door securely locked and had never allowed any one to enter that room.

Bruno stood in the ray of light which came through the opening, looked at Marie and barked. The maid took courage and tiptoed to the door. Pushing it open, she took a few steps into the den. It was a stuffy, gloomy room, littered with chemical apparatus. A flat-topped desk stood in the centre and the only two small windows that the room afforded were heavily curtained with dark green velvet.

Marie looked about the place as she walked in farther. Bruno barked loudly and as the maid glanced in his direction she started, while her face took on an expression of horror mingled with fright. The mastiff stood be-

side the motionless body of Cecil Margrave, his master.

Marie moved toward the body. "Monsieur," she called, "are you ill? Monsieur!"

All was silent. Margrave lay face downward on the floor with one arm thrown straight upward so that it concealed his face. Marie stooped to feel his pulse. The hand was cold, the arm rigid.

"He's dead, Bruno!" shrieked Marie. "He's dead!" And taking to her heels, the maid fled from the room.

Running upstairs with Bruno at her side, she went to Mrs. Margrave's room. "Oh, Madame! Where are you? Madame!"

No one was there. Into Madame's boudoir rushed Marie, calling wildly, but her mistress was not there. She ran to the servants' quarters, but all had gone out that day on leave of absence and none had returned. All alone in this awful place with a dead man lying below! Marie was beside herself. What should she do? Then an idea struck her. Hurrying down to the library, she called up police headquarters.

"Who is this? Desk-sergeant? No matter. Please, will you send some one up right away. Monsieur Margrave is dead—— What? Murder? Oh, I don't know, is it murder or did he just die—I don't know. But please to hurry——"

After a few minutes, the desk-sergeant managed to get the address from the excited maid and promised to send some one up immediately. Marie went to her room and locked herself in until, at the end of fifteen minutes, the door bell rang. Two policemen and a detective had arrived. Marie felt relieved and showed them to Margrave's den at once.

Arthur Leed, the detective, stooped down and, putting his hand on the dead man's back, felt that it was moist. On looking closer, he found a small hole in the coat, such as would be made by a bullet. The two policemen lifted the body while Leed unbuttoned the coat, and on pushing it back they saw a white shirt stained with blood.

Leed rose to his feet. "Murder," he pronounced.

Marie shrieked. "Maybe they have killed Madame, too! And maybe threw her poor body down those terrible rocks. Oh, Madame——" Marie collapsed in a heap on the floor.

"Come, come!" said Leed, helping her to rise. "You mustn't give way like this. Calm yourself and answer the questions truthfully which I'm about to ask you. When did you find Mr. Margrave's body?"

"About five minutes before I phoned to the police station."

"How did you come to find it?"

"I was out all day. About ten o'clock I came home. I saw the door of this room open, maybe half way. Bruno acted queer. Monsieur never left this door open. It was always locked very tight. It all seemed so—so very queer. I came in and I saw—that!" Marie pointed to Margrave's body and shuddered.

"Are there any other servants?"

"Yes, but they all went out this morning. I have always stayed at home with Madame when the others were gone, but my sister is very ill and Madame said I must go see her to-day. And now—what has happened to Madame? Oh, why did I not stay with her!"

"What makes you think some one would harm Mrs. Margrave? Has she any enemies?"

Marie pointed to Margrave's body and with flashing eyes answered, "He—he was her only enemy."

"Mm!" Leed looked meaningly at the two policemen. Then to Marie he said: "I guess that is all for now. You may retire if you like——"

"Retire? When Madame is gone? Why not try to find her?"

"If Mrs. Margrave does not show up in a few hours we certainly will hunt for her."

Marie disliked both the policemen and the detective. After giving Leed a sarcastic look, she turned on her heel and left the room.

"Mallen," said Leed, turning to one of the policemen, "notify Captain Darrell; then call a coroner and a physician. Guess you'll find a phone on this floor somewhere."

Mallen went out to hunt for the phone, while Leed and Sexton, the other policeman, looked about the room.

"Darned stuffy in here," observed Leed, "aren't there any windows?"

"Two little ones over there," answered Sexton, drawing aside the velvet curtains. "Look

as though they might belong to a doll house. They're locked at that. Margrave must have been opposed to fresh air."

"Well, we're not. Open them! I can't work in a room where I can't breathe."

Leed was noting the position of the body when a small red object attracted his attention. It was merely a fluffy little ball—a crimson pompon.

Picking it up, Leed examined it. "What might you call this, Sexton?"

Sexton hurried to the detective's side. "Don't know what you'd call it, but ain't it one of those folderols women wear?"

"Oh, sure! Now I know," replied Leed. "They wear those on their boudoir slippers."

Just then Mallen came in. "Found this outside the door, Leed," he said, holding out a pale blue slipper.

"What did I say!" cried Leed with delight, then sobered immediately. "But this red thing certainly doesn't belong on that pale blue affair."

At that moment both the physician and coroner arrived. Dr. Gorman examined the body carefully and wrote down his report.

"How long has he been dead, Doctor?" asked Leed.

"I should say about four and a half hours," answered the doctor.

Leed looked at his watch. "Almost twelve," he observed. "That would make the time that he was shot about seven-thirty."

Doctor Gorman nodded in the affirmative. "The bullet entered his back and pierced the heart. Death was instantaneous."

The doctor was about to leave when the front door opened and closed. Marie rushed down the stairs with a cry of delight. "Oh, Madame, I'm so glad you have come. I was afraid they had killed you, too. It is too terrible! You mustn't go in there!"

"Hush, Marie," said Mrs. Margrave in her mellow, vibrant voice. "What are you talking about? I don't understand."

Marie was about to explain, when Mrs. Margrave's escort, Newton Crosby, stepped forward to meet Mallen, who was approaching them.

"What has happened, officer?" he asked quietly.

"Mr. Margrave has been murdered," replied Mallen gravely. "Who are you, may I ask?"

"Mrs. Margrave's friend."

"I see. Well, I guess the both of you are in a bad position. Better step into the library. Mr. Leed, the detective, will want to speak to you and Mrs. Margrave. No use going in there," pointing to Margrave's den, "the coroner is there to take care of the body."

Crosby turned to Mrs. Margrave. "Come, Xena," he said, tenderly, supporting her as they went into the library. "Be a brave little girl."

Marie helped her mistress take off her wraps; then arranging some cushions in a large easy-chair, she said: "Sit here, Madame. So. I suppose that silly detective will keep you up half the night with his old questions. How do we know who killed the monster? Whoever did, I should like to thank him——"

"Marie, dear, hush. You shouldn't say such things."

"Well, I think it, Madame, and I feel better when I say it. Now, I'll make for you such a lovely glass of orangeade that you never did taste before. And you, Monsieur? Would you also like to have some?"

Newton Crosby smiled and nodded. "If it isn't too much trouble, Marie."

"No trouble at all, Monsieur," and Marie swished out of the room just as the detective came in.

"Good-evening," said Leed in a cold tone. "Mrs. Margrave, I believe, and Mr.——"

"Crosby," answered Newton shortly.

"The situation is this," continued Leed, addressing Mrs. Margrave. "Your maid called up headquarters around ten o'clock, saying that Mr. Margrave was dead. Investigation shows that he was shot through the back, the bullet piercing the heart. Your maid claims that she and the other servants have been out all day. Is that correct?"

"Yes, that is correct, Mr. Leed."

"Now, I would like to ask you, Mrs. Margrave, when did you leave the house?"

"I think it was about seven-thirty, wasn't it, Newton?"

"Yes," answered Newton. "I looked at my watch as we went out and it was exactly seven-thirty."

"Then you were here and accompanied

Mrs. Margrave out of the place at that time?"

"Exactly."

"Hm! That looks rather bad, Mr. Crosby."

"What looks bad?" demanded Newton.

"Dr. Gorman's report states that at the time of his examination the body had been dead for four and a half hours. That makes seven-thirty, or perhaps just a few minutes before, the time that the shooting took place. Doesn't that look rather bad for both of you?"

"Perhaps to you it does," admitted Newton. "But I can assure you that neither Mrs. Margrave nor I had anything to do with the shooting."

"Well, that's to be proved," snapped Leed. "Funny you didn't hear the shot."

"May I ask, Mr. Leed, what kind of revolver was used?"

Leed looked at Newton in a surprised manner as he answered: "I don't know yet. We haven't found the revolver."

"Well, it might have been an automatic," suggested Newton. "That would account for us not hearing the shot. There is also a possibility that the crime was committed just after we had gone."

Leed smiled sarcastically. "I think not." Pulling the crimson pompon out of his pocket, he held it out to Mrs. Margrave. "Does this belong to you?"

Mrs. Margrave drew back. "I have pompons on my boudoir slippers," she answered wearily, "but not red ones."

"Then you can't offer any explanation as to how this came to be lying at the side of your murdered husband?"

Xina Margrave dropped her tired head back onto the cushions. "No, I don't know anything about it."

A whirligig of thought kept swirling about in her brain so rapidly that it made her dizy. Her eyelids fluttered no matter how hard she tried to control them and the marble-whiteness of her skin was intensified by her jet-black hair.

Once Newton thought she had fainted, and bending over her, he called softly, "Xina."

A sigh escaped Xina's lips as she opened her eyes. "I'm all right, Newton."

Turning to Leed, Newton Crosby flared: "I don't see why you're keeping Mrs. Margrave here. Why not let her retire? There will be lots of time to question her to-morrow."

Leed had been standing at a little distance watching them closely. Now he moved forward a bit as he replied: "There are just a few more questions which I want answered now, Mr. Crosby. The law does not waste time." Then staring at Xina, he asked: "At what hour did you see your husband last, Mrs. Margrave?"

"It must have been about five o'clock. Yes, I'm sure it was five, because I went to my room just as the cuckoo clock was striking and I remember counting the cuckoo calls."

"And you remained in your room until Mr. Crosby called to take you out?"

"Yes."

"Did your husband know that you were going out?"

"No. I didn't tell him."

"Did he know Mr. Crosby and did he disapprove of his coming here?"

"Certainly my husband knew Mr. Crosby," answered Xina with impatience. "And as to the latter part of your question, Mr. Margrave disapproved of every one but himself. He was a rank egotist and gave himself the credit of being all-wise."

"By a certain remark passed by your maid, Mrs. Margrave, I infer that you had frequent quarrels with your husband. Am I right?"

"We have quarreled occasionally," admitted Xina, looking straight into Leed's eyes, "but I never allowed them to be frequent."

"When did the last quarrel occur?"

"Why—to-day, in the afternoon."

"Hm! How old was your husband, Mrs. Margrave?"

"Forty-five."

"Quite some older than you."

"Yes, twenty years."

With a sneer on his lips, Leed turned to Newton Crosby. "I guess that will be all for to-night, Mr. Crosby. Of course, you will have to remain here."

"Very well," returned Newton, just as Marie re-entered the room with a tray.

Leed went back to Margrave's den, while the others, after having drank Marie's refreshing orangeade, retired to their rooms.

The dawn of the next morning was ushered in by a beautiful sunrise. Xina Margrave had rested badly, so she rose and slipping into a silk negligee, propped herself on a chaise-longue near the window.

Gazing at the slowly rising luminous orb on the eastern horizon, Xina tried to bring some order to the hodge-podge of thought that had passed through her brain. Even now she could not realize that her husband was dead; that he could no longer torment her.

The door opened and Marie came in. "Why, Madame," she said, hurrying to Xina's side, "up so early? I was hoping that you were fast asleep."

Xina shook her head. "I can't sleep, Marie. This will be a terrible day. It is sultry now, what will it be by noon? Then, there's the shadow of that awful tragedy——"

"Tragedy nothing," broke in Marie disgustedly. "He was a monster and——"

"But you don't understand, Marie. Suspicion rests on me and——"

"You, Madame! Oh, it is too silly!"

"And Mr. Crosby is also suspected."

"Well, Monsieur must have been that angry sometimes that he had to hold his fist, but he wouldn't kill——"

"You're right, Marie. Mr. Crosby is far beyond that stage. He wouldn't commit such a crime."

"Do you want your breakfast now, Madame? You must eat even though you force yourself. You know, that Leed fellow will have a hundred more questions to ask."

"I'll take a cool shower first, then you may bring up some toast and coffee."

During the early morning Captain Darrell arrived. He and Leed spent much time in going over the facts as already presented and in looking for new clues. A thorough search of the first and second floors was made, but no revolver was found. The servants were questioned as to where they were all day and by evening their statements were verified. In the afternoon Xina and Newton were called into Margrave's den.

Captain Darrell drew up a chair for Xina, while Newton and Leed remained standing.

"Have you ever been in this room before, Mrs. Margrave?" began the captain.

"No. Mr. Margrave never allowed any one in this room."

"Did he ever give a reason for not allowing any one in here?"

"No definite reason. He would simply say that this was his laboratory and den, that it belonged to him and that no one else had any business in here."

"Then you wouldn't be able to tell whether there was anything missing from this den. You see, we are trying to find out whether the motive of robbery had anything to do with the murder."

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Xina, her fingers twitching spasmodically as they rested on the arms of the chair.

The captain was silent for a moment, then asked pointedly: "Why didn't you tell your husband that you were going out with Crosby?"

The tears rushed to her eyes as with trembling lips Xina asked: "Why do you embarrass me with such questions? I'm innocent of this crime. Why do you continue to torture me?"

The unhappy woman dabbed her eyes with her handkerchief, and when she looked up she met the cold, piercing gaze of Leed. His face was stamped with scorn as he said: "The captain is waiting for your answer, Mrs. Margrave. A woman who steals out with another man while her husband is in the house isn't quite so innocent as she pretends to——"

Newton Crosby had turned white with indignation. "Stop where you are, Mr. Leed," he interrupted with vehemence. "Who are you, that you dare judge Mrs. Margrave's actions? You have no other moral yardstick but your own for measuring other people's morals. And it is quite imperfect, I assure you."

"Mr. Crosby," broke in the captain, "be careful. The law need——"

Newton turned on the captain. "I'm not afraid to tell you, Captain Darrell, that a lot of your man-made laws and detective methods are laughable. If I choose to take a suffering woman out of the hell she is living in to give her just a few hours of peace, that's nobody's business but mine. Mr. Leed, as a detective, is here to find the murderer, not to question or cast reflections on Mrs. Mar-

grave's character. I'm here to protect her and I'll do it every inch of the way."

Captain Darrell and Leed were both amazed and silenced. After a time the captain found his voice. "Mr. Crosby, it seems queer to me that, having been in this house at the time of the murder, you deny knowing anything about it. My opinion is that you know a great deal more than you tell. You are shielding some one or else that some one is shielding you."

"You are wrong, Captain Darrell," answered Newton in his usual quiet manner. "It was lacking just a couple of minutes of half-past seven when I got here last evening. Mrs. Margrave had been watching for me and came down to let me in. Her wrap was hanging on her arm. I helped her put it on and we left immediately. This occurred in the front part of the hall. Neither one of us were anywhere near this room."

"Very strange." Turning to Xina, the captain continued, "That brings us back to you, Mrs. Margrave. Where were you just before Mr. Crosby came?"

"In my boudoir."

"Then from five o'clock up to the time you came down to admit Mr. Crosby, you never left your suite of rooms?"

"That is correct?"

"Where was your husband?"

"I suppose he was in his den."

The captain leaned forward. "How do you know that?"

"I didn't say I knew it, Captain Darrell. I said that I supposed he was in his den. If he had been in any other part of the house, he would have heard or seen us going out and of course would have tried to prevent me from going. As it was, he didn't see us."

Captain Darrell took the blue slipper off the desk and held it out to Xina. "This was found last night, just outside the door of this den. Is it yours, Mrs. Margrave?"

"Yes," answered Xina, passing her hand over her forehead, while the room seemed to be going around and around. Her lips turned blue and her breath came in short, quick gasps.

"For Heaven's sake," said Newton to the captain, "have you no pity? You have kept her in this hot place long enough. She can't stand——"

"Mr. Crosby," replied the captain coolly, "you're not here to interrupt. We always grill the accused until they show some emotion. We can usually find out whether they are guilty or not."

"Accused? Do you mean to say that you accuse Mrs. Margrave of this crime? It is preposterous!"

"Perhaps Mr. Crosby would like to be accused instead," put in Leed with a short, sarcastic laugh.

A piercing scream escaped Xina's lips and as she lurched forward Newton caught her in his arms. Picking her up tenderly, he carried her upstairs. Dr. Gorman was called and with Marie's aid he brought Xina to after she had been unconscious for an hour. On leaving, the doctor left strict orders with the captain that under no circumstances was Mrs. Margrave to be disturbed.

Then, taking Newton aside, he said: "Mrs. Margrave's nervous system is in a serious condition. She must have rest and she must sleep. If, by ten o'clock tonight, she isn't sleeping naturally you had better call me. I'll have to administer a little drug. Don't look so horrified, Mr. Crosby. I know you don't approve. I don't, either. But where it is a matter of life or death, I forget my scruples for the time being."

Opening off Xina's boudoir was a small room which she called her sanctum. The atmosphere here was decidedly Oriental. in fact everything in the room had come from the Far East. It was in this sanctum that Newton found Xina that evening. She was standing over an incense stick inhaling its fragrant odor. The man came in so softly that Xina did not know he was there until she felt his arms around her, and looking up, she met his smiling eyes.

"Do you feel better now, Xina?" asked Newton, a note of anxiety sounding in his voice.

"Yes, I feel a little better now, but—oh, Newton, in another way I feel worse. For the last half hour I've been struggling so hard between belief and unbelief. The Christian God I've prayed to so long doesn't seem to hear. Yet I want to believe in a God. You

were telling me of Brahmin, Newton. Perhaps if I prayed to Him, He would hear."

Newton smiled. "There is only the One, darling, whether you call Him God, Brahmin, Ahura-Mazda, Allah or Tao. It is the cry of the child to the Father that He responds to, not the name."

Xina hid her head on Newton's shoulder and her voice was muffled as she pleaded, "Please forgive my stupidity, Newton."

"You're not stupid," replied Newton gently, "you're just tired. Brahmin hears you because you're a part of Him. He is right in your heart, dear, but in the struggle you forgot where to look for Him. Call to Him again, Xina; I know that you'll find Him, the Giver of Life."

Xina lifted her head and, turning about, stretched out her arms. The incense smoke curled upward and crept around her face.

"Oh, Brahmin," she cried, "hear your weary Xina. Thou knowest that she is innocent because thou knowest all. She is just a tiny wavelet on the troubled waters. Still the waters that the wavelet may have rest."

For a moment she was silent. Then, as a smile broke across her face, she said in ecstasy: "Brahmin hears, Newton! The waters are calm and now I have strength. No matter what they accuse me of, I have strength to go through the struggle."

Newton gathered her in his arms. "And now you must sleep. Go to your room and let Marie put you to bed."

"No, no, Newton. Let me lie here on the divan. I know I can sleep now. There's my lute. Sing to me."

Taking up the lute and seating himself beside Xina, Newton started to sing one of Longfellow's poems set to music which began:

"Allah gives light in darkness,
Allah gives rest in pain.
Cheeks that are white with weeping
Allah paints red again."

Before he had finished the song Xina was fast asleep. Tiptoeing to the door, Newton motioned to Marie, who was waiting for her mistress in the adjoining room.

"Bring a blanket," he whispered, "Madame is sleeping."

"Oh, Monsieur!" said Marie under her breath, as she brought the blanket. "Dieu is good."

Newton smiled and nodded. Together they covered the sleeper, while a gentle breeze came in through the window and played in and out of her dark hair.

Marie clasped her hands. "She sleeps like a little child."

Newton placed a finger on his lips and after motioning Marie to turn out the light he quietly left the room.

On the second morning after the tragedy, Newton came down early and going straight to the library found Captain Darrell and Leed there. They were lounging in easy-chairs, enjoying their cigars.

"Good-morning," said Newton, looking at the captain, "have I permission to use the phone?"

"Certainly," answered Captain Darrell. "Help yourself."

"Thank you." Newton picked up the phone and gave his number. "Hello! Is this Bennet Miles, the private detective? I'm Newton Crosby. I want to engage you on a murder case. You can start right away? Fine! Come to —— Boulevard East, Weehawken. Good-by."

As Newton hung up the receiver, Leed leaned forward, astonishment written all over his face.

"What's the idea?" he snapped.

"The idea is," replied Newton calmly, "that I want a detective on this case."

With that he started to leave the room, but just as he reached the door Leed called: "See here. I don't get this."

Newton turned and came back. "Then I'll have to explain. I can't let the case rest in your hands, Mr. Leed. You seem to have made up your mind that Mrs. Margrave is guilty. I know that she is not. So far, you have formed all your opinions with marked prejudice. Just because an innocent woman has been put with another man besides her husband, you would brand her guilty. Mrs. Margrave's code of morals is higher than either of you men conceive of. I'm very sorry, Mr. Leed, but you have forced me to act as I have. For Mrs. Margrave's protec-

tion and my own, I had to engage a detective who will examine the facts of this case from a different angle than the one from which you examine it. I hope you will treat him as a fellow worker and give him the facts as you found them."

In about an hour's time Marie went to the door to admit a tall, swarthy-complexioned, dark-haired man, with the deepest blue eyes sparkling with the light of compassion.

"Monsieur is the new detective?" asked Marie.

"Yes," answered Bennet Miles with a smile that was as sincere as a child's. "Is Mr. Crosby here?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur! With all of these meddlesome policemen in the house, no one could get one inch outside this door."

"That's their business, you know," the detective reminded her with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Yes, but—I feel such a prisoner. And they made Madame ill; so ill she almost died. Ugh! It is terrible!"

On hearing the voices Newton Crosby came downstairs. Going up to the newly engaged detective, he wrung his hand heartily. "I'm mighty glad you have time for this case, Mr. Miles. We're in an awful mess here and I'm quite sure you can straighten matters out. Captain Darrell is in charge and Detective Leed is working with him."

Bennet Miles raised his eyebrows in such a comical manner that Newton laughed outright, then explained: "Captain Darrell and Mr. Leed have taken a very one-sided view of the murder of Margrave. They think Mrs. Margrave is guilty, while I know she is not. It is for that reason that I called upon you."

"Thank you for putting so much trust in me," replied Bennet Miles suavely. "The maid told me that Mrs. Margrave had been made ill. I trust she is feeling better now?"

"Yes, she is much better. Marie said she slept soundly all night and remained awake this morning only long enough to have her breakfast. I'm sure she'll be ready for your questions this afternoon."

"Well, there's lots of time," returned Bennet Miles. "I'm in no hurry. If she doesn't feel strong enough this afternoon we'll wait until to-morrow."

Newton looked at the detective gratefully. "Mrs. Margrave has suffered so much that she deserves to be treated gently. Captain Darrell and Mr. Leed are in Margrave's den where the murder took place. I believe they'll give you the particulars. Please step this way, Mr. Miles."

Newton rapped at the door of the den and they were admitted by one of the policemen.

"Captain Darrell and Mr. Leed," began Newton, "I believe you know Mr. Miles?"

"Yes, we are acquainted," answered the captain, nodding to Bennet Miles, while Leed responded with a stiff "Good-morning."

"Mr. Miles would like to have the particulars of the case," continued Newton. "Will you have time to give them to him, Captain?"

"Yes, I'll have time."

"Thank you." Newton turned to the new detective. "If you should want me, Mr. Miles, you'll find me in the library."

With a smile Bennet Miles nodded his head. Newton closed the door quietly as he went out and it remained closed for the rest of the morning. As Marie put it: "If it hadn't been for the two policemen on guard, one would have been able to forget that morning that anything so terrible as a murder had taken place."

In the afternoon Xina came down to the library to be questioned by Bennet Miles. As she entered the room the detective came towards her and extended his hand.

"You are feeling better, Mrs. Margrave? Strong enough for another ordeal?"

As Xina looked into Bennet Miles's eyes she was sure that human understanding would rule all of his decisions. "I'm strong enough for anything now," she answered firmly. Seating herself in an easy-chair, she smiled up at Newton. Never had he seen her look so happy.

Bennet Miles drew up a chair close to Xina's and, seating himself on the arm of it, he said: "Now, we're going to have a nice little chat. Captain Darrell and Detective Leed have given me the case as it appears to them. But I have nothing to do with appearances. I shall deal only with the facts as were presented to me."

Here they were disturbed by Bruno's angry barking and Leed's voice shouting at him. Newton hurried to the door. "Here, Bruno," he called. "Come on. That's a nice dog."

"My, what a fine mastiff!" exclaimed Miles, as the dog eyed him with suspicion. Then clapping his hand on his knee, he said, "Come along, Bruno."

The dog hesitated for a moment, then bounded across the room and, jumping into the chair, pushed his head under the detective's arm.

"Well, I'm glad he takes to you, Mr. Miles," laughed Newton. "He seems to give Leed enough of trouble. Bruno simply won't make friends with him."

"He'll be friendly with me," smiled the detective. "Guess we can go on now. There are four points, Mrs. Margrave, that are being held as evidence against you. First, you were home at the time of the shooting. Secondly, you quarreled with your husband a couple of hours before he was shot. Thirdly, a pale blue pompon, mysteriously turned crimson and belonging to you, was found beside the body. Fourthly, the pale blue slipper to which the pompon had belonged was found outside the door of the den. Now, these are merely so-called clues and are not infallible. Captain Darrell informed me that you registered emotion when shown the slipper; that will count against you. I am more inclined to think it was evidence of over-wrought nerves rather than telltale emotion."

Bennet Miles leaned over and patted Xina's hand. "Won't you tell me a little of your life with Mr. Margrave? I want to get an idea what sort of a man he was. It will help me greatly."

Xina was perfectly calm as she answered: "I don't really want to say anything of my life with Mr. Margrave, because it will look as if I am trying to defend myself with an untruthful story. But if you say it will help you, I will tell you."

"Please do, Mrs. Margrave. I feel sure that what you tell me is the absolute truth."

"Thank you, Mr. Miles. Well, when I was quite small my mother died. Father then took to traveling and I think we traveled all over the globe until we reached Alaska. He liked it there, so he established a home. I grew up in utter seclusion and ignorance. He never allowed me to talk to any one but himself. I was weary of that frozen Northland and I longed to see the flowers I remembered having plucked when a child.

"Then Cecil Margrave came. Father took a fancy to him, perhaps because he, too, like father, was interested in chemistry. For hours they pored over books and then still more hours they spent in experimenting. This went on for about a year, when one day father was taken seriously ill. He lingered for a short time, then died.

"I was crushed with fright and loneliness. Cecil Margrave was really very tender to me right after father's death and I grew to like him. He urged me to marry him, and when he saw that I hesitated he threatened to go away and leave me alone. I was afraid and thinking that he would continue to be kind to me, I consented. We were married by a minister in Juneau and when the ice broke in the spring we sailed for New York.

"But Cecil Margrave became insolent and he seemed to delight in tormenting me. He kept me a prisoner just as much as father did, and when he did take me among his friends he was always sure to humiliate me. It was on one of these occasions that I met Mr. Crosby. My husband found all kinds of fault with me and my friendship with Mr. Crosby. It was on the afternoon of the murder that Mr. Margrave said the most brutal things. He accused me of having married him for his money, for what he could give me. He said I was unfaithful and that I was without honor.

"For the first time in years the tempest of anger raged in me and the bitterness that I had held pent up so long came forth. My honor is dear to me, and I believe I fought like a tigress to defend it. He was so astonished that he never answered me. I left him standing in the centre of his room and went upstairs. That was the last time I saw him and I shall never forget it."

Xina leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes. "Five years of his insolence," she sighed. "I don't know how I stood it."

Bennet Miles looked at Xina with the compassion of one who understands human feeling. "You're a brave little woman," he said

at last, "and I want you to feel that things will turn out all right."

Xina opened her eyes. "Then you think I am innocent?"

"I do." Before Xina could answer, Bennet Miles went on: "I don't believe there is a person in this house who had anything to do with the murder."

"Then you have found other clues?" asked Newton eagerly.

"Why, not exactly," answered Bennet Miles, his eyes twinkling mischievously, "but I'm following an altogether different path of reasoning than the one Darrell and Leed are following. I'll soon see where it leads to."

Here Bruno pulled his head from under the detective's arm and, looking into the man's face, beat his tail up and down on the chair.

"We'll find the murderer, won't we, Bruno, old boy?" said Bennet Miles, patting the dog gently.

Bruno gave a loud bark and, jumping off the chair, dashed from the room.

"I wonder what ails Bruno," mused Xina. "He acts in such a strange manner."

"The atmosphere about the place has affected the dog, too," laughed Newton, pinching her cheek. "Don't worry about him. He'll get over it."

Bennet Miles rose to his feet. "You'd better lie down again and rest, Mrs. Margrave. I've kept you up for quite a while. Guess I'll take a little stroll in the lovely garden you have about the house."

Xina smiled. "I'm afraid my poor flowers have been neglected the past couple of days. I've always been in the habit of tending them myself."

Bennet Miles gazed into her tear-filled eyes. "Would you and Mr. Crosby like to go out, too? I think you both would be benefited by the air."

Xina hesitated. "But—will they——"

The detective read her thoughts. Throwing his head to one side, he said with a touch of humor in his voice: "Oh, that's all right. If I play chaperon, I'm sure Darrell and Leed won't mind."

Xina sprang to her feet with a laugh. "You are just the dearest chaperon. We are ready to go."

As they walked down the hallway, Bennet Miles stopped to speak to the officer on guard. "Tell Captain Darrell I'm taking the prisoners out for an airing."

The officer saluted. No one of them ever thought of opposing Bennet Miles.

They were about to go out when Marie dashed into the hall and, seizing the detective by the arm, she pleaded: "Oh, Monsieur, may I not go, too?"

Bennet Miles patted her on the shoulder. "Why, of course you may."

Marie clasped her hands. "You give me such joy, Monsieur Detective."

"Careful now," replied Bennet Miles, laughingly. "If you feel so joyful now, you may also feel the pain of going in again more keenly."

And as they passed into the garden an atmosphere of gayety surrounded the little group.

That evening, after Captain Darrell and Detective Leed had retired, Bennet Miles went to Margrave's den. He seated himself in the revolving desk chair and resting his chin in the palm of his hand, he was soon wrapped in thought. Bruno came in noiselessly and, going up to the detective, rested his front paws on the man's knees.

Bennet Miles looked down at the dog and with a gentle pat asked: "What's the matter, Bruno?"

Bruno whined softly and, removing his paws, went to the door. There he stood looking at the detective as though pleading for him to come. Bennet Miles had noticed the dog act in this manner several times, so he determined to find out what Bruno wanted. As he walked to the door, the mastiff wagged his tail joyously and bounded up the first flight of steps. There he waited to make sure the detective was following him. Then he sprang up the next flight.

When Bennet Miles reached the third floor he found Bruno standing on his hind legs with his front paws against the door of one of the attic rooms.

"Oh, I see," mused the detective. "You want me to go in there. All right, Bruno, but I'll go in alone. You come downstairs."

After seeing that Bruno was safely closed in the kitchen, Bennet Miles went to the room that Marie had prepared for him, and

taking a flashlight out of his traveling bag he proceeded up to the attic. He remained there for about fifteen minutes, when he came down to his room again. But while he had gone up empty-handed, except for the flashlight, he now grasped the nozzle end of a revolver in his hand. With a smile, he laid it on the dresser and, after locking his door, the detective retired for the night.

The next morning, Bennet Miles rose very early. He did not care to have his work in the attic disturbed, so he accomplished his quest before the others were stirring. Later, he was standing by one of the library windows, when he saw Newton coming down the steps. "Good-morning," the detective saluted. "Come in a minute. I would like all of you people to gather in this room some time during the morning. I have some pleasant news."

"Have you unravelled the mystery?" asked Newton, grasping the detective by the arm in his eagerness.

Bennet Miles shrugged his shoulders, then laughed.

"Well, I know you have, Mr. Miles. I see it in your face. Have you breakfasted yet?"

"No, not yet."

"Then come along to the dining-room with me. Captain Darrell and Mr. Leed will be down in a few minutes. Mrs. Margrave is having her breakfast in her room."

It was an hour later when Xina came down. She found Newton, the captain and the two detectives gathered in the library. A gentle breeze was waving the window draperies to and fro.

"Good-morning, everybody," she said brightly, stepping into the room. Then looking at Bennet Miles, she continued: "Marie is all excitement. She upset my egg-mug into a dish of prunes and in trying to rescue the egg she spilled my coffee all over the tray. Now, what have you been telling her, Mr. Miles, that it has so disturbed her equilibrium?"

Bennet Miles shook with laughter. Then, "I'm so sorry, Mrs. Margrave——"

"Oh, you needn't be," interrupted Xina, her eyes sparkling with mirth, "it afforded me quite a bit of amusement. It was really funny to see Marie fishing for that egg and trying so hard not to break it. But, there!" as she noticed Captain Darrell's sour face, "I'm wasting precious time."

"Not a bit of it," answered Bennet Miles in his gentle manner. "I'm glad you are feeling so well, Mrs. Margrave, as I was particularly anxious to have you here this morning. This meeting concerns you more than any one because it will prove you to be innocent of having taken any part in the tragedy."

Xina looked at Bennet Miles through a mist of tears while she choked down a sob.

Captain Darrell approached the detective. "How do you make that out?" he snapped.

Bennet Miles quietly opened the drawer of the library table and took out a revolver. Laying it on the table, he said: "There's the missing revolver, Captain Darrell. It's an automatic with one chamber discharged."

Captain Darrell picked it up, examined it through a powerful magnifying glass, then handed it to Leed. "Don't seem to be any clear finger prints," ventured the captain, looking quite puzzled. "Did you find any, Mr. Miles?"

"Yes, I found prints," replied Bennet Miles. "The same kind as I found on Margrave's desk in his den. It was those prints that gave me an idea as to the murderer and Bruno, here, helped me prove that my idea was correct. It pays to gain the friendship of a dog."

Bruno, on hearing his name, frisked over to the detective and sat down in front of him.

Leed looked at Bennet Miles in astonishment. "Do you mean to say you know who murdered Margrave?"

Bennet Miles nodded in the affirmative. "I'll go get him for you. No, you can't come, Bruno. Mr. Crosby, would you mind to hold on to the dog? And whatever you do, don't let go."

The detective left the room, returning in a few minutes with a large potato bag swung over his shoulder and something wiggling about inside of it. Marie, looking curious, came in behind the detective.

Putting the bag down on the floor and letting go of it, Bennet Miles exclaimed, "Here is the murderer!"

A few more convulsive movements in the bag, and out jumped a good-sized monkey of the Capuchin type.

"Oh," shrieked Xina, "it's Jaco! How could I have forgotten that horrible beast."

"Mon Dieu," cried Marie at the same time. Then running to Xina's side, she put her arms around her mistress as though to protect her. "Oh, Madame, I thought that old ape was gone and here he's back again."

For a moment Newton forgot about Bruno and loosened his grasp. The dog took advantage of this and, lurching forward, got away. He dashed after Jaco, but the monkey was too quick for him. He had climbed the side draperies of one of the windows and clung to the curtain pole above. Bruno sat on the floor beneath him, barking loudly.

Bennet Miles turned to Xina. "Was Jaco your husband's pet, Mrs. Margrave?"

"Yes," answered Xina with a shudder. "He kept him just to torment me. Every day I had to see that beast sitting opposite me at the table. I just don't know how I came to forget about him. Marie, didn't you think of him?"

"Yes, Madame. But I thought he was gone and I didn't want to bother you about him."

"And did Jaco like to play with your slippers, Mrs. Margrave?" questioned Bennet Miles.

"Yes," replied Xina. "He would tear the pompons off all of my slippers. He liked to play with them."

"You see," Bennet Miles turned to Captain Darrell and Leed, "the mystery is quite easily unraveled. On the afternoon of the murder, after Mrs. Margrave had gone to her room, Cecil Margrave went to his den, taking Jaco with him. The monkey had ripped the pompon off Mrs. Margrave's slipper and, discarding the slipper outside the door of the den, took only the pompon in with him. While Margrave was working, paying no attention to his pet, Jaco was amusing himself on top of his master's desk. The prints on the polished part of the desk prove this as also does Jaco's suit."

Here the detective reached into the potato bag and drew out a white suit that had been specially made for the monkey. Bennet Miles continued: "You see, it is spotted with red ink. Jaco had, no doubt, dipped the pompon in the ink-well. Hence your crimson pompon. Then seeking further amusement, he leaned over and opened the top drawer of the desk where Margrave kept his automatic revolver. From the position of Margrave's body and the desk where Jaco sat, it is evident that Margrave had been working at his bench with his back toward Jaco and so did not see that his pet had the revolver in his possession. With the inquisitiveness of a monkey, Jaco pulled the trigger; the bullet entered his master's back and he fell to the floor—dead.

"The monkey became frightened and, taking the revolver with him, hid away in the garret where Bruno so kindly directed me to find him last night. He must have been hungry and made a few secret excursions to the kitchen, because there were morsels of food lying on the floor in the room where he was hiding."

"Ah, there it is!" exclaimed Marie triumphantly. "The cook said that each morning she found food missing from the refrigerator, but I thought——" Marie stopped, plainly embarrassed.

"I understand, Marie," laughed Bennet Miles, his eyes twinkling like two stars; "you thought the policemen were having a nice little feast all by themselves. Didn't you?"

"Well—yes—I did," blurted Marie.

Every one laughed at the maid's discomfiture until Xina came to her rescue. Putting her arms around Marie, she said: "Now, leave my maid alone. She is a good girl."

"Certainly she is," replied Bennet Miles. Then turning to the captain, he asked: "Is everything quite clear, Captain?"

"Yes, to me it is. How about you, Leed?"

"Doesn't seem to be anything to add," answered Leed rather sullenly.

"Well, guess we'll get back to headquarters then. Er—Mrs. Margrave, do you want your husband's body sent here or——"

"No," interrupted Newton. "I will arrange with the coroner for the burial of the body."

"Very well," replied the captain. Then to Bennet Miles he added, "Congratulations, Mr. Miles."

The detective bowed courteously. "Thank you," he replied, simply.

As Marie closed the door on the retreating captain, detective and policemen, she gave a sigh of relief. "Free once more," she thought. The maid then peeped into the library and she smiled as she watched Newton clasp her mistress in his arms.

"Yes," he was saying to Bennet Miles, "we'll be married in a few days and then I'm going to take her away from here on a trip to the Far East."

Xina extended her hand to the detective. "I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Miles, for the wonderful service you rendered us. We are going away and we can't take Bruno with us. I won't give him up to any one but you. Will you accept him?"

Bennet Miles held Xina's hand in a tight grip as he replied: "I will accept him, brave little woman. To me he is very valuable and he will be a wonderful remembrance of a battle fought and won. But, pray, what are you going to do with the monkey? He still sits on his perch."

Newton laughed. "We'll send him over to the Zoo in New York. They'll be glad to get him."

"That's the only place for an animal like that," commented the detective. "And now I'll be on my way. Try to forget the past, Mrs. Margrave. A new life is beginning for you, one that I trust will be filled with happiness."

A few moments later Xina and Newton stood in the doorway watching the detective go down the path that led to the street. Bruno was trotting beside him, but turning about suddenly, he ran back to Xina. Dropping to her knees, the woman put her arms around the dog's neck and laying her cheek on his head, she whispered: "Good-by, Bruno. You've been such a good dog."

A low whistle came from the detective's direction. Bruno pricked up his ears and hesitated a moment as though not knowing what to do. Then making up his mind suddenly, he dashed off after Bennet Miles.

SEAWEED HARVEST AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY

"THE harvesting of seaweed and its preparation for commercial use form an industry which has developed importance in this district during the last few years," writes United States Consul Frank W. Mahin, from Amsterdam.

"At the northern extremity of the Zuider Zee and in its easterly extension, called the Wadden Zee, between the mainland and the chain of islands extending toward the German coast, seaweed grows abundantly in an area some three miles in circumference. The soil of that place happens to be peculiarly adapted to seaweed, which can thrive only in soft and somewhat muddy ground.

"It is mown with scythes, as it grows straight and its top nearly reaches the surface of the water. The mowers work when the tide is low, standing in the water, but clothed in a water-tight garment reaching to the shoulders. Formerly one scythe was used at a time, but now several are fixed to a line, which the workers draw to and fro like a saw above the base of the weed.

"The product is spread out on adjacent fields to wither in the sun. When it becomes black it is placed in ditches to soak in water. The fresher the water the blacker the weed turns, and the blacker it is the higher becomes its price.

"After a few days in the ditch the weed is again spread on the field, and when thoroughly dry is taken into warehouses, where it is made up by means of a press into bales of about 100 pounds each, ready for market.

"The fully prepared seaweed is chiefly used as filling for mattresses and the like. But during the past twenty years many experiments with seaweed have been made in the Netherlands, during which, it is stated, some fine qualities of gelatin were produced from the weed.

"The exports of seaweed from this district aggregate from 2,000 to 3,000 tons annually, going chiefly to Belgium, England and France, with occasional shipments to the United States.

Current News

SEEING WITHOUT EYES

That the blind can perceive light and darkness is asserted by Dr. A. Cantonnet in Medicine (Paris). Dr. Cantonnet tested eyeless seeing machinery by bandaging his eyes lightproof and concentrating his attention for fifty hours on perception of light. He found that he could then perceive not merely light and darkness but also large and shining objects.

Testing many blind persons, he found the same ability. He attributes this vision without eyes to Ranvier's sensory cells, which have a nerve sensation with the brain centres.

INDIANS' CANDIES

From prehistoric times the Indians of Ecuador have utilized wax found in certain species of tall palms for making candies. This wax occurs on the trunks in granular form, each tree furnishing about 50 pounds. The trees grow in great numbers on the mountains along the coast. Samples of the wax were sent to France and Germany before the war and the chemists in both countries made favorable reports, but the war terminated further investgations in both countries. One chemist said that it could be made use of in the manufacture of explosives.

LARGEST CRATER IN THE WORLD

Two Swedish scientists named Waddell and Ygberg recently made a journey of exploration through Iceland with the interesting result that they discovered the largest volcanic crater in the world. It took them nine days, using three horses and sledges to cross the great sea of ice of the Watmajokel from west to east in order to reach Kolar on the Fjord of Hornar. Upon the Hogjokel they found a tremendous volcanic crater containing hot water and no less than 8 kilometers long and 5 kilometers wide. It was surrounded by a number of hot springs. The Swedish savants who discovered it named it the Svea crater, and it is regarded as not only the greatest crater in Iceland but probably, so far as is known at present, the largest in the world.

EVER-BEARING ORANGE TREE FOUND AT TAMPA

An ever-bearing orange tree which citrus fruit growers believe is destined to revolutionize the orange industry of the state of Florida, if not of the entire country, has been discovered by horticulturists in a small grove at Avon Park, near Tampa, and to protect the specimen its purchasers have placed around it a heavy wire fence twenty feet in height and stationed guards day and night. The tree has been in bearing continuously eight years, but until recently its existence was known only to the owner and several neighobrs, who, according to citrus experts, did not realize its value but regarded it merely as a freak of nature. A syndicate has been formed to propagate the tree through budding so that a large number of trees may be set out in groves in 1923.

A ROCKING STONE FROM BUENOS AIRES

Those who are familiar with the sights of Bronx Park, New York, know what a rocking stone is. For others, it may be explained that the term refers to a boulder of decent size that has been deposited, usually by glacial action, on the surface of rocky ground in such a way as to sway back and forth under the application from the wind or from a human hand, without toppling completely over. The phenomenon must obviously be a rare one, since the stone must possess sufficient stable equilibrium to prevent it from keeling over entirely, yet be unstable enough to make motion possible. And now we learn of a rock down in the southern hemisphere, near Buenos Aires. In at least one respect this is more extraordinary than the New York stone, for the latter presents an entirely solid picture to the eye, and one would never suppose that it would rock until one had tried it; but the Argentine boulder looks as though the least touch would topple it over into the valley below. This rocking stone is no small stone with regard to size, either; it is 24 feet high and 18 feet long, and weighs 300 tons.

ALASKAN BOUNDARY MONUMENTS DESTROYED

An earthquake or some gigantic force has tipped over many of the aluminum-bronze monuments marking the Alaskan-Canadian boundary along the 141st Meridian, according to reports received from Fairbanks.

The monuments were set up along the 600-mile line at all important points and are five feet high, weighing 300 pounds and imbedded in 2,000 pounds of concrete. Trappers and prospectors working in the region claim to have seen numbers of these sign posts lying several feet from the original base as if thrown out by an explosion or upheaval.

One theory is that the action of frost caused the destruction; another is that it was the work of a grizzly bear, but the earthquake one is thought most likely. Few boundaries of equal length are so straight, as it follows the meridian without the slightest deviation, regardless of mountain, swamp or forest. Where timber was encountered a twenty-foot clearing was made and now used much by trappers. The survey and work started in 1890 and took ten years to complete.

INDIANS MADE SAWS MANY CENTURIES AGO

The Indians of Central California made saws before Columbus ever visited America. James A. Barr has made a hobby of collecting prehistoric implements, and he has made a collection of 158 Indian saws. Three of these, possibly used to skin game or fish, were fragile implements of soapstone; all of the rest were of hard, black obsidian.

The Indians not only had no metal of which to make their saws, but they had no metal tools with which to make them. Each saw had to be slowly chipped or ground or polished with other bits of stone until it was shaped for use.

Some were serrated on the outer edge, some on the inner and some on both; most of them were also notched near one end, as for a handle. Considering the difficult conditions under which they were made they show remarkable craftmanship and skill in manufacturing.

In a single tomb were found thirty-one of these saws distributed in a semi-circle around the feet of an Indian, who may in life have been either a wealthy chief or a professional saw-maker.

In the same tomb were found many pieces of obsidian ready for shaping.

REMARKABLE SNOWFALL

The heaviest snowfall in the United States, so far as known, occurs in the high Sierra Nevada of California, especially in the region adjacent to the line of the Southern Pacific Railway connecting Sacramento, Cal., with Reno, Nev. According to a recent account of this region, published by Mr. Andrew H. Palmer in the Monthly Weather Review, it includes many square miles over which the average snowfall of the winter exceeds 100 inches. Moreover, at several points where measurements of snow have been made regularly by the Weather Bureau for a number of years, the average reaches much greater figures. Thus at Summit (Placer County, altitude 7,017 feet) it is 419.6 inches, while at Tamarack (Alpine County, altitude 8,000 feet) about 521 inches (43 1-2 feet) of snow falls in an average winter. The "record" for a single season appears to be held by Summit, where no less than 783 inches, or 65 1-4 feet, fell in the winter of 1879-1880. (These figures, of course, refer to the actual depth of snow as such, not the "water equivalent," as ordinarily entered in precipitation records.) The snow of the high Sierras furnishes most of the water used for irrigation in California, and is sometimes referred to as "The life-blood of the State."

The pressure resulting from the enormous accumulations of snow in the high Sierras produces astonishing effects. Mr. Palmer records that a fence at the Blue Canyon railway station had for its horizontal bars some discarded locomotive boiler flues of steel, 2 inches in diameter and 8 feet long. The heavy snow bent these to such an extent that they fell to the ground from their sockets in the wooden uprights. The Southern Pacific has built 32 miles of snowsheds between Blue Canyon and Truckee, at a cost of $42,000 a mile over single track and $65,000 a mile over double track. In an average year $150,000 is spent on these sheds in upkeep and renewals. They are built of massive timbers, and can support a layer of snow 16 feet in depth; whenever this amount is exceeded the snow must be shoveled off by hand. Flat-roof houses are unknown in this region. All roofs are gabled at a sharp angle to shed the snow. It is a common occurrence for one-story houses to be buried to the eaves or above. Before the building of the railway the snow of these mountains made them nearly or quite impassable during six months in the year.

WOMAN STAYED AT HOME FOR YEARS

Miss Fannie M. Read of Hancock, N. Y., left her home for the first time in fifty-nine years to attend the funeral of her brother, E. Darwin Read, who was eighty-two years of age when he died, after being a voluntary recluse ever since the beginning of the Civil War. Although an aged woman, Miss Read is still vigorous and in good health. She is said to have made a vow in 1861 that she would never leave her room after her father broke off her engagement to a National Guard officer. She kept the vow.

HAUNTED 14 YEARS

Reuben E. Hall of Paris, Mo., met face to face in a Denver (Col.) street a man whom he thought he had killed fourteen years ago and the memory of whose alleged death had haunted him all these years.

A letter telling of the remarkable case came from Denver to I. H. Shatzer, manager of the Tool Specialty Company. It was from Shatzer's half-brother, Reuben E. Hall.

Hall, a young farmer near Paris, Mo., went to the Kansas harvest fields to work in 1907. He disappeared. The letter received by Mr. Shatzer was signed with a strange name, Harry E. Thomas. It contained this story of the disappearance and the new name:

For fourteen years Hall, under the name of Harry E. Thomas of Denver, has quaked at the sight of a police officer. He has avoided all persons he knew when he was Hall. He has spent wakeful nights fearing arrest for murder. A wife and then a child served to add to his anxieties. What if they should discover he had killed a man?

But the worry is over. Thomas was walking recently on a Denver street. He met a man for whose murder he believed he was hunted, the letter states. The two recognized each other at the same time. The "murdered" man held out his hand in greeting.

"I thought I killed you," Thomas gasped.

"Land, no," the "victim" replied. "I was only bruised a little."

In the fourteen years since his disappearance Hall's family has mourned him as dead. Relatives after a diligent search took steps to collect his insurance, but lacking proof of death, were unable to do so.

Of what happened after Hall, with $175 in wages, left the harvest fields the letter has this to say:

"I got into a dice game. I won $750. One of the heavy losers was John Williamson. He and I fought over the game, then patched up our differences. Friendly, we climbed into a box car to go to Kansas City. We quarreled again, fought, and Williamson fell from the train in the fight.

"The next day I read in a paper that the body of an unidentified man had been found on the railroad right of way. I was not guilty of murder, but to prove it was a different thing. Others had seen us quarrel.

"I went West, changed my name to Thomas and grew up with the country. Finally I settled in Denver, was married and now have a daughter six years old.

"You cannot imagine the relief now. Williamson went home with me, and we told my wife and daughter. I am the happiest man in the country. We are coming to see you and all the rest of the folks right away. I can hardly wait."

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," published semi-monthly at New York, N. Y., 1or October 1, 1921. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Luis Senarens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication, for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher—Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Editor—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor—None; Business Manager—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Harry E. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; M. N. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; J. F. Desbecker, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; R. W. Desbecker, 168 West 23d St., New York, N Y.; C. W. Hastings, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and condition under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona-fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association or corporation has any interest, direct or indirect, in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

LUIS SENARENS, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1921.—Seymour W. Steiner. (My Commission expires March 30, 1922.)

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

NO.

43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Charles F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
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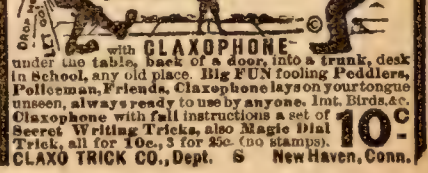

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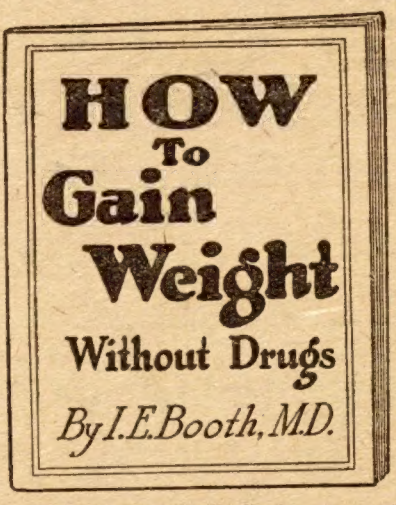

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